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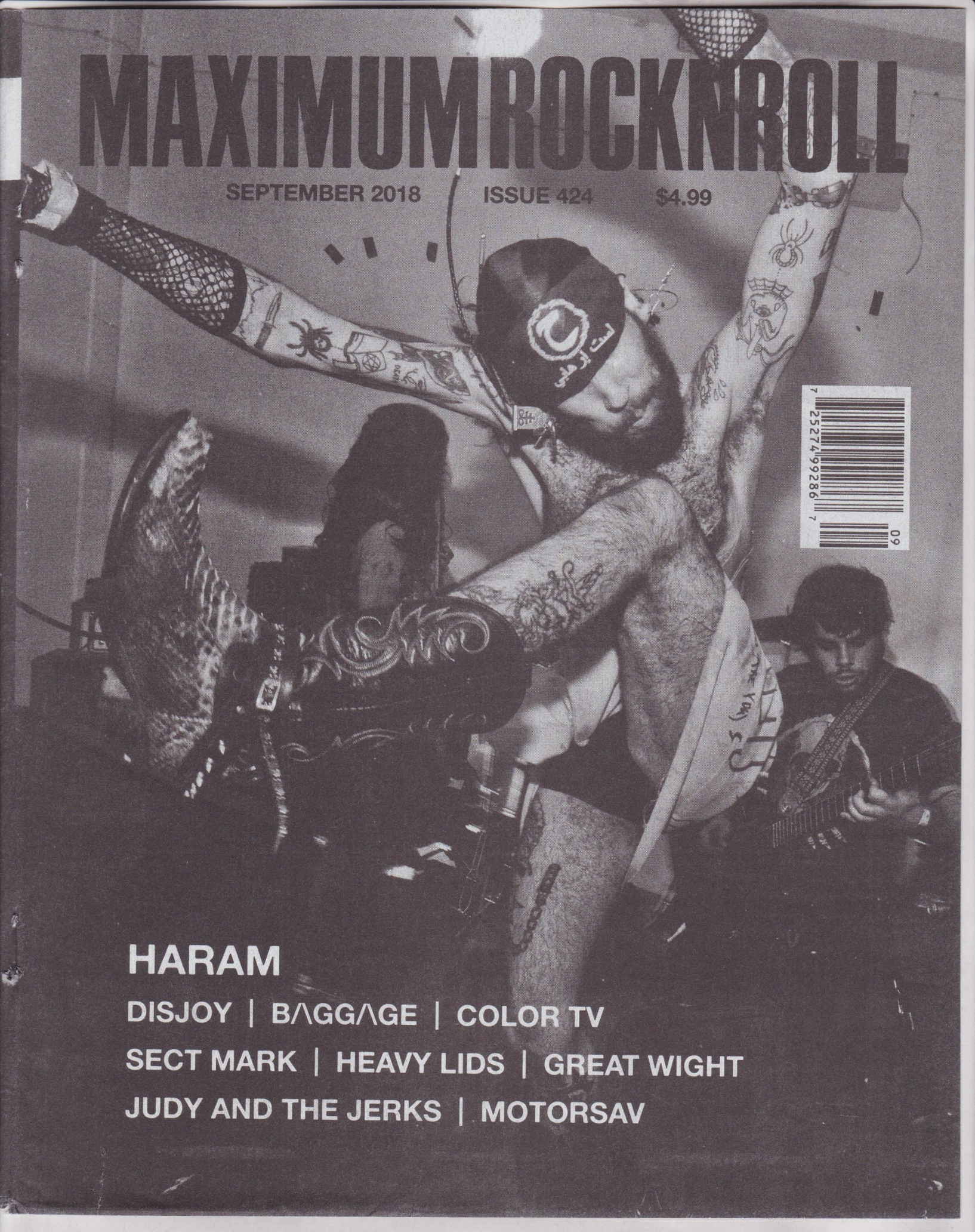

HARAM

DISJOY | B/\GG/\GE | COLOR TV

SECT MARK | HEAVY LIDS | GREAT WIGHT

JUDY AND THE JERKS | MOTORSAV

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Send records, demos, zines, and letters to PO Box 460760 San Francisco, CA 94146-0760

Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

PETER AVERY

MARRÓN – Terrenos 12"
COUNTER INTUITS – 45
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP
TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
NO LOVE – Choke On It LP
GIANT PEACH – LP
DEMO – LP
SPARKMARKER – Products & Accessories 2x12"
FIRESTARTER – First Album LP
THE STEELERS – CS

MATT BADENHOP

DESTRUYE Y HUYE – CS
V/A – Para Cuando En Mi Te Mueres CS
AUS – LP
S.H.I.T. – What Do You Stand For? 12"
NO LOVE – Choke On It LP
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP + live
CREMALLERAS – live
PINEAPPLE RNR – EP
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
SYNDROME 81 – Beton Nostalgie LP

HEATHER BLOTTO

AUSENCIA – live
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP + live
PREENING – live
LAS SUCIAS – live
HEALERS – Street Sweeping CS
COLD LEATHER – Smart Moves LP
DIRTY AND HIS FISTS – EP
MA HOLOS – Bee on a Rose LP
RICKY HELL & THE VOIDBOYS – LP
TABLE SUGAR – Introductory Material LP

MITCH CARDWELL

FIRESTARTER – both LPs + live
COUNTER INTUITS – 45
LYSOL – 45
COLD MEAT – Pork Sword Fever EP
TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
CHRONOPHAGE – live
GOLDEN PELICANS – live
BATTLESHIP – live
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
BACK TO BASICS – Shaded Eyes EP

ROBERT COLLINS

ARRYAM / STRUGGLE SESSION – split EP
THE BELLICOSE MINDS – "Incision" 45
RICKY HELL – CS / AMYGDALA – live
WOUND MAN – EP / FEALTY – CS
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP + live
STRUGGLE SESSION / TEST – split EP
UNFAIR – CS / NO QUESTION – EP
SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA – CS
RATS IN THE WALL – Warbound EP
S.H.I.T. – What Do You Stand For? 12"
THE DIDERS / DOA – split EP

JOAN DETORO

S.H.I.T. – What Do You Stand For? 12"
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP + live
CREMALLERAS – live
DRAMA – live
SALIVA TRIBE – live
DEATHGLAM – live
COLD MEAT – Pork Sword Fever EP
Sorry To Bother You film
DAUÐYFLIN – Aldauði EP
MOZART – live / SNOB – live

MIRANDA FISHER

COUNTER INTUITS – 45
FIRESTARTER – both LPs + live
PINEAPPLE RNR – EP
NO LOVE – Choke On It LP
TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
DAUÐYFLIN – Aldauði EP
COLD MEAT – Pork Sword Fever EP
LYSOL – 45 / BLACK PANTIES – 45
OUTER SPACIST – LP
CHAIN WHIP – Self Destruct EP

LAYLA GIBBON

TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
BLACK PANTIES – 45
COUNTER INTUITS – 45
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs Revenge LP
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP
PINEAPPLE RNR – EP
MARRÓN – Terrenos 12"
NO LOVE – Choke On It LP
DIANETICS – And Psycho Horse EP
FIRESTARTER – both LPs

GREG HARVESTER

Harvesting in the South...

KENNY KAOS

LASER GEYSER – LP
EVIL ENGINES – Drug City LP
REAL SICKIES – Get Well Soon LP
BLACK PANTIES – 45
FIRESTARTER – First Album LP
LYSOL – 45
RATS IN THE WALL – Warbound EP
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
DISMALS – 45
SPELLS – Loose Change LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

DISMALS – Shortness Of Breath 45
COUNTER INTUITS – 45
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs Revenge LP
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
BLACK PANTIES – 45
OUTER SPACIST – LP
BACK TO BASICS – Shaded Eyes EP
TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
PINEAPPLE RNR – EP
FIRESTARTER – both LPs & live
Sorry To Bother You film

RAY LUJAN

ABOLITIONIST – The Instant LP
BACK TO BASICS – Shaded Eyes EP
BAD SONS – Cry Tough EP
FILAMENTS – Look To The Skies LP
FIRESTARTER – both LPs
PINEAPPLE RNR – EP
PRETTY FLOWERS – LP
REAL SICKIES – LP
TABLE SUGAR – both LPs
THE WEIRDOS – live
88 FINGERS LOUIE – live

MARISSA MAGIC

Mozart'd.

FRED SCHRUNK

LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs Revenge LP
DAUÐYFLIN – Aldauði EP
COLD MEAT – Pork Sword Fever EP
HARD FEELINGS – Side Ways LP
STIFF LOVE – In Trouble EP
LYSOL – 45
HETEROFOBIA – Sudor EP
CHARACTER ACTOR – EP
S.H.I.T. – What Do You Stand For? 12"
NO LOVE – Choke On It LP

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Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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Judy and the Jerks by Martin Sorrondeguy

ISSUE #424

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We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Information about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com/ads.

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Drugs No Stupidity Show Info.+Booking
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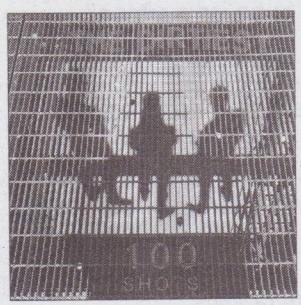

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CENTO SHOT LP

DESAHUCIADOS
LP

PUPPY AND THE HAND JOBS
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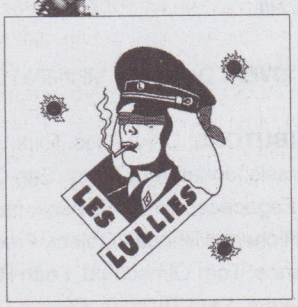
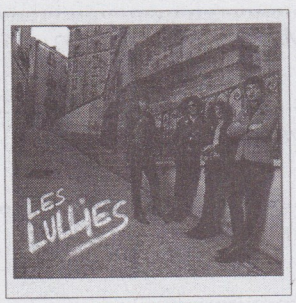
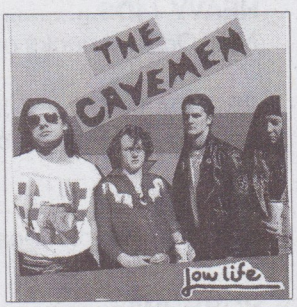


LES LULLIES
7 AM EP



LES LULLIES
LP



THE CAVEMEN
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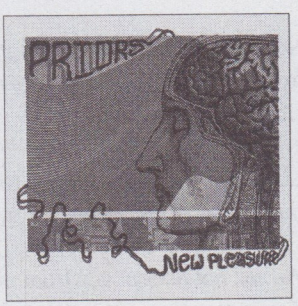
HERE COME TOMMY AND THE COMMIES
LP



PRIORS
NEW PLEASURE LP

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

The following emails were exchanged prior to the publication of this issue. Communication from our side is included for context.

Dear *MRR* and readers,

I'm writing you to announce that we just formed a new group of political activists around here in Berlin called Distort, Shut Down, Fuck Off (DSF). We're a constantly growing group of anti-imperialist activists with the aim of preventing further American aggression towards other nations after decades of illegal wars started around the globe by the USA, destroying multiple cultures, killing millions and millions of people in most continents of this planet. In order to stop that, we wanna do our best to prevent money from floating into the USA, and that also includes money from the cultural sector,s and that of course includes also the American punk scene. As you know, many American bands and labels are very popular here in Europe and especially here in Germany, where there are punk bands touring from all over the US constantly. In our hometown of Berlin alone, where the DSF movement has a very strong following, several punk bands from the US play every week. Since we have a tight network and know most venues, we are pretty positive that we can point out to all those imperialist Yanks who cross the picket line to come here and collect money for the imperialist genocides their government commits around the globe. Of course we must not only shut down punk shows by American bands and send them Yanks back home, but we're also gonna stop American punk records from floating into Europe and since we know where the local distributors live and who runs the record shops that sell American records, we are also positive that we can raise enough pressure to seriously intimidate those individuals that still sell records from the imperialist nation of war criminals that you guys unfortunately live in. Oh, that leads directly to the next point: of course we must fuck everybody up who still distributes *MRR* over here. We hope you don't mind, it's nothing against you, we totally appreciate your anti-imperialist stance and all, but we must stick to the principles of the DSF movement in order to prevent money from flowing into the USA that would otherwise help them to kill more innocent people around the globe.

Sincerely,
Tommib Oi!
DSF Movement
(nothing personal, just anti-imperialist)

Hi Thomas,

Did you want us to consider this for print in the next issue, or was this meant to be private communication?

—Miranda

Hey Miranda,

Thanks for writing. Obviously the DSF movement is fictional, but in the logic of BDS supporters (which is not mine) it had all the rights to exist. Many countries suppress minorities, and many nations invade others and terrorize innocent people who did never harm a fly, and I have to say in the past 60–70 years there´s one country in particular that has mastered that discipline and that is the country you live in. (In Germany they say "Don't throw rocks if you live in a glass house.") Since especially in times of a racist r***** leading that nation, wouldn't it be absolutely consequential to support the DSF movement also if you think the BDS movement is a good concept to be transferred into the post-DIY punk scene? To be honest, I think your move is outrageous. I would appreciate if you would run the DSF letter, I don't mind if you comment it with being fictional, but I think it can be helpful for others to realize the double standards your approach on Israeli politics has...

To make that clear, I'd rather like to see a debate about this than a war of texts, so let me make it clear that at this point I don't judge you as individuals (from what I can say, you folks have done a great job speaking about feminism and racism), but I highly criticize your most recent move as antisemitic and also pretty irresponsible considering how much influence your mag has internationally (and I've already seen debates on facebook amongst punks about to which degree the Holocaust was an invention of a Zionist conspiracy before this shameful episode). I hope you accept my criticism and my wish to have the DSF letter to be published.

Respect and best regards,
Thomas
Thought Crime Records
(former ad customer and distributor of *MRR* in Germany)

OK, thanks Thomas!

We definitely want to encourage discussion on this issue. I hope that you have a chance to read our letter in issue #423, which explains the reasons behind our decision.

—Miranda

Thank you Miranda, and thank you for speaking openly and engaging in controversy. Yes I read that letter in #423. I neither agree with the BDS movement, nor with your decision to transfer their tactics into the post-DIY scene. In all the years the punk movement has existed, it has never happened that punks have been boycotted by other punks only because they belong to a certain ethnic or religious group, and many punks live under governments with way more problematic policies towards minorities. In your logic, you'd have to boycott half the punk scene, and your own country must be the first to be banned. It's always the Jews that hang first, no matter what. There's poison in the water, the Jews are punished for it, WWI is lost, the Jews are punished, the Middle East is unstable since the Osman empire has collapsed, everybody kills each other off, but only the Jews are punished, even though it's obvious that what Shiite and Sunni Muslims are doing to each other is much worse than what the Israeli government ever did to any of them. This is crazy and only has its roots in antisemitism, in this particular case in left-wing antisemitism that dates back to the '70s, when Western left wingers helped Arab terrorists to separate Jewish passengers from others in hijacked airplanes to execute them. The Western left has never

been reflecting on this darkest hour of their own history when they were sympathizing with Chinese Maoists, who killed way more people than the Israeli army, while the same left wingers dearly hated Israel. You'd speak about Tibetans today, not Palestinians, and maybe exclude Chinese punks from *MRR* today if those left wingers had made other choices at a time long before you were born. I know I can't convince you, I just wish your word wouldn't have so much more power than mine right now. Sad.

—Thomas

PS: In case you're wondering: I've never been into the Antideutsch movement as I always avoided group pressure and synchronized thinking as I thought this is the antithesis to punk.

Dear *MRR* coordinators,

I would like to comment on your decision to boycott Israeli punk bands with reference to the BDS movement. To be honest, it matters little to me whether I get to read an Israeli scene report in *MRR* or not. If you, as the editorial collective, decide not to run one that's your decision. But by stating that you're not running one because BDS compels you not to do that, you are elevating the question to one of ethical and political principle. And on that level, I cannot help commenting, since your decision, although certainly well-intended, represents a worrying trend in radical politics where a desperate search for the moral high ground replaces any meaningful political engagement.

I should perhaps say that I'm writing this neither as an "*MRR* shitworker" nor as an "Israeli punk," the two demographics you seem to have mainly expected reactions from. I'm writing this as a European (citizen of Austria, resident of Sweden) who has been involved in radical politics and hardcore punk for 30 years, and who has been reading *MRR* on and off since the late 1980s. I should perhaps add that anti-imperialism has always been a focus of my political work, and that I have several times been to both the West Bank and Gaza in support of Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation.

I must admit that I don't find it easy to respond to the explanation for your decision provided in *MRR* #423, as you explicitly say that the argument you're putting forward is not your own but that of people who have "helped you along the way" (punks, but also "advocacy groups and BDS activists in the US"). Things are further complicated by the fact that you proceed by not actually presenting a specific argument but several arguments. So, not knowing what your exact position is, I will try to respond to the most important of the arguments you reference.

To begin with, some of what you write is irrelevant to this particular discussion. I don't think anyone involved in it questions your right "to be explicit about [your] pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS stance"; the fact that you "do not want to contribute to a media culture that is predominantly Islamophobic, pro-Zionist, and anti-BDS"; the intention to "restrain yourselves from presenting content that you believe is not worth highlighting or engaging with"; the conviction that "supporting BDS and Palestine is not inherently antisemitic"; or the importance "to uplift and prioritize the voices of people who are suffering the most." Therefore, it is pointless to throw all this into the mix.

Secondly, some of the arguments you're offering simply don't make any sense. For example, you write that you believe "that the voices of Palestinians are more important to present than the voices of Israeli people." But how does publishing articles by and about Israeli punks prevent you from publishing five times as many articles by and about Palestinians? The question of how many Palestinian voices are to be heard in *MRR* seems entirely unrelated to whether you feature Israeli voices or not, unless you are operating on some kind of quota system that I'm unaware of. Another example: You say that "publishing interviews with Israeli bands, no matter their stance ... essentially serves as a promotion of Israel the state." How so? If you interview DOA, does this essentially serve as a promotion of Canada the state? What's the difference?

Thirdly, some of your arguments are hypocritical. You stress that "even if Israeli punks are critical of the Israeli settler state, and even if they do actively work with Palestinians, they still benefit from colonialism and do not have the same fight for survival that most Palestinian people engage in on a daily basis." This is certainly true. But it reflects realities that apply in corresponding ways to pretty much anyone involved in punk or radical politics. Regardless of their convictions, men benefit from patriarchy, whites from white supremacy, heterosexuals from heteronormativity, and US citizens (including punks, advocacy groups, and BDS activists) from US imperialism. This is an empirical fact, but it's not what's ethically and politically relevant. What's ethically and politically relevant is what these people do based on the status the birth lottery and their socialization have bestowed upon them. Why should I, as an Austrian living in Sweden, boycott Israeli punks but embrace punks from the US? This is beyond me.

It seems that the only thing you could say in response to this is that there happens to be an international boycott movement directed at Israel but not at the US or any other imperialist (or wannabe imperialist) country, which means that the citizens of these countries are off the hook. This, however, is no sound ethical or political argument, it's simply a matter of good fortune. And, let's be honest, if there was an international boycott movement directed at, say, Russia because of its authoritarian regime, the persecution of political opponents, and the annexation of foreign territories, would you argue that this should imply a boycott of Pussy Riot and Russian anarchists? And if there was an international boycott movement directed at the US (a far more destructive imperialist power than Israel whose military strength is highly dependent on US support), would you argue that this should imply a boycott of *MRR*? If not, why not? How is the case of Israel different?

Related to the above, I think you really need to consider the implications of your decision and of statements such as "We must turn down Israeli content across the board for ethical reasons." It basically means that out of all the punks around the world benefiting from structures of domination (colonialism and imperialism included) you are singling out one particular group for boycott, not based on anything the individual members of that group have done, but because of the collective entity you allege they represent: the state of Israel. Not only is it cynical to boycott people who have been persecuted because of their defiance of that very state, this logic also goes against anything that antidiscrimination theory teaches us. Your decision becomes even more puzzling when we consider that many of the people targeted by this punk boycott have taken much higher personal risks and made much bigger personal sacrifices in their fight against the Israeli occupation of Palestine than most international pro-Palestine activists I know (and that, of course, includes myself).

Finally, and by far most importantly, all of your arguments substitute moral righteousness for meaningful political action. BDS is no religion, and it ought not be turned into one. Doctrine and moral purity don't liberate people. BDS is a political means to end Israeli occupation and to ensure the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. This purpose must also be the guideline for its practical implementation. Now, it helps no one to isolate the forces that fight the policies of the state of Israel from within. These forces aren't the most important ones in the struggle, they should not receive disproportionate attention, and their contradictions must not be romanticized away. But they are an important piece of the puzzle, just as white resistance against apartheid in South Africa was an important piece of the puzzle in the anti-apartheid

struggle, and as the US-based movement against the war in Vietnam was an important piece of the puzzle in the defeat of the US military in Indochina. To cut such forces loose from an international resistance movement that is essential for sustaining them means to weaken this movement, not to strengthen it. This is also true in the case of Israelis who fight the occupation of Palestinian territories. The vast majority of Israeli punks belongs to them.

In solidarity,
Gabriel Kuhn
Stockholm, Sweden

Hi Gabriel,

Thank you so much for writing in! We believe dialogue here is important. We understand that you aren't a Maximum Rocknroll *shitworker or an Israeli punk—we were referring to the authors of the letters we were responding to—but we're happy to respond to your concerns in a way that we hope builds upon our letter in issue #423.*

We feel that the context of our letter matters. The first letter we responded to was written by an Israeli punk, and the second was jointly written by two shitworkers—one of whom, Daniel Becker, had proposed publication of a potential Israeli scene report. Becker is an Israeli-American shitworker who grew up in the Israeli punk scene and planned on using his connections at home to create the scene report; he also planned to turn in another interview or two with other Israeli bands. In contrast, at the time the Israeli scene report was pitched, we had no pitched content from Palestinian punks nor any contacts within Gaza or West Bank. Our lack of content is likely related to living conditions in occupied Palestine, but it can also be contributed to the specific mechanics of a contribution-based magazine. So in our position, it was a zero-sum situation in terms of balancing content: we had no content to work with from Palestinian punks, whereas Becker was a direct link to the Israeli scene with a lot of content to send us. It was unbalanced. During the discussions surrounding our decision to turn down Israeli scene report pitch, shitworkers began work on multiple content items surrounding Palestine and Middle Eastern issues. Since you are someone who has been active in occuped Palestine, we would very much appreciate contacts for Palestinian punks who would like to be represented here.

We present this information to you because we believe in the importance of being transparent as a media source, which is why we disagree with you entirely on the first point you make in your letter. As the international punk magazine, we believe our voice can change the dialogue within punk surrounding a number of issues. Thus, as coordinators, it is our duty to be clear in painting a broader picture about why this conversation is necessary. While you yourself are well aware of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, there are many people, especially in the United States and in Europe, who do not understand that criticism of the Israeli state or how Zionism is not inherently antisemitic. For a Grade-A representation of that, please read the exchange above with the German punk who has essentially called us antisemitic for our pro-Palestinian stance. Clearly, some are unaware that it is possible to be against Israeli without being antisemitic. If we can present new information to people and have them change their mind or look at occupied Palestine in a new light, then we have succeeded in our goals there. If we can prevent another punk band from touring Israel despite the Palestinian people's call for a cultural boycott, then we have succeeded.

We disagree with you when you talk about Russia, the United States, and the potentials of other boycotts against colonial powers. These and other hypotheticals you pose are whataboutisms; you are essentially sidestepping the plight of Palestinian people by focusing on boycotts that are not called for. *This is irrelevant to the discussion at hand; our focus is on BDS.*

Likewise, we disagree with the hyperbolic statements about the harm Maximum Rocknroll *may cause Israeli punks. Even though* MRR *is a magazine with influence in the punk sphere, we do not believe excluding a scene report serves to "isolate the forces that fight the policies of the state of Israel from within." You may be overestimating our reach when you claim that we serve to "weaken this movement, not to strengthen it" by not publishing content focusing on Israeli bands. We are merely one magazine out of many with far larger reader bases. We do not have a monopoly in the field of radical literature by any means; Israeli punks have a variety of sources available to them, whether they be in print or online.*

As noted in issue #423, there is a broad range of opinions in the argument about what BDS looks like in terms of a cultural boycott. However, we stand by our decision to honor the requests of the Palestinians behind this cultural boycott by refraining from highlighting the careers of Israeli musicians. We agree with Ramy Silyan's letter in that same issue. He states that deprioritizing Israeli voices is a means of supporting BDS, especially in the US and Europe, given that Palestinian people are so frequently denied a voice. Again, this is why we talked about our place in the broader sphere of American media. We would ask you to consider your priorities as an activist based on some of the language you use in your letter. Over and over, you highlight the importance of allies of oppressed people instead of the plight of oppressed people themselves. We would like you to examine why you excluded the losses that Palestinian and Arabs are forced to endure when you stated that "many of the people targeted by this punk boycott have taken much higher personal risks and made much bigger personal sacrifices in their fight against the Israeli occupation of Palestine than most international pro-Palestine activists."

In terms of actions to take, we partially agree with you on your third statement. We agree with you that it's important to analyze people's actions "based on the status [their] birth lottery and their socialization have bestowed upon them." We are white women (two cis, one trans) who live on unceded Ohlone land. No matter how much work we do, we still benefit from whiteness and from colonialism. We believe it is utterly important that people with privilege of any sort be aware of their privilege and also use it to stand up for people without that same privilege. However, we believe that the direction we take to fight oppression absolutely must be dictated by the will of the people who most live under that oppression. In our case, we would not publish white voices over Ohlone voices for Ohlone issues, white punks speaking for Black issues, etc. The importance of allies in these cases, including Israeli punks, is not to be dismissed; we merely argue that the oppressed voices are more important to highlight. This is why we still stand by our decision to prioritize Palestinian voices in the wake of Israeli state oppression. While you express cynicism at whether or not we would boycott other nations, including the US, we would discuss following any boycott and honor the collective voices of any oppressed group.

Vicky Cassis
Joan DeToro
Miranda Fisher

PS: Are you a reader who doesn't know what BDS is? Go to bdsmovement.net to learn about the international, Palestinian-organized non-violent movement to weaken Israel's complete grasp over occupied Palestine.

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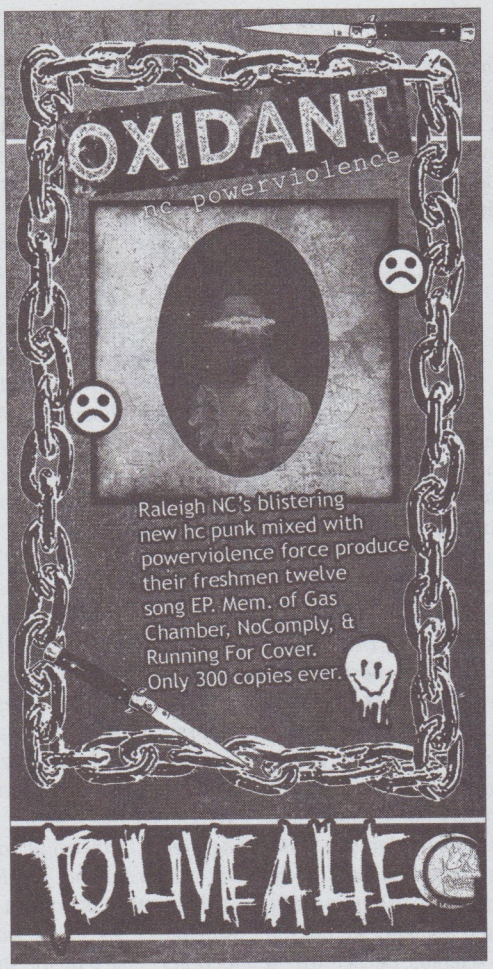

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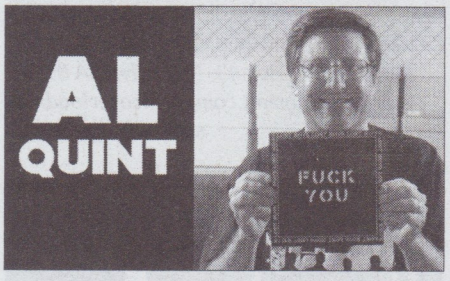

FINALLY ATTACKING THE REVIEW PILE

We begin with Round Six from the inexhaustible Neck Chop label, and it's another quality assortment of spirited punk sounds. The poster accompanying the press releases touts this as Washington vs. Indiana, with the former represented by KID CHROME, LYSOL, and STIFF LOVE 7" slabs and the latter by odds 'n' sods compilation LPs from LIQUIDS and ERIK NERVOUS.

Out of the Pacific Northwest comes the latest from LYSOL, two songs of slam-bang punk. "Teenage Trance" is a collision of hardcore and garage, throwing in a nod to BAD BRAINS' "Right Brigade." Meanwhile, "Chemical Reaction" has a purer garage feel, with a keyboard-less HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS-type arrangement. All you need to know is it fuckin' rocks.

The two other 7"s from that part of the country include people from LYSOL. KID CHROME is the *nom-de-punk* for Chad Bucklew's solo project. His latest musical communiqué features three re-recorded songs from earlier demos, and the recordings are sharper and clearer but far from pretty or polished. The rhythm remains mechanized, but the guitar riffs slash and burn, and the vocals are full of soulful howls. STIFF LOVE has LYSOL's Christine Lundberg (under the name Lazy Susan) handling guitar and vocals, and their four song *Trouble* 7" is a fun 'n' brash garage punk excursion, with sneaky hooks and a whomping backbeat. What's not to love?

Northwest Indiana, as many of you probably know, has been a hotbed of quirky, weirdo, punk for the past several years, an incestuous scene where it seems like everyone involved plays in multiple bands or have their own solo type projects. LIQUIDS' *Hot Liqs Revenge* offers twenty rip roarin' tracks in about 30 minutes (nineteen are listed and the one that isn't is a spirited cover of NICK LOWE's "Heart In The City.") I can't keep up with the band's prolific discography, but as far as I can tell, this is the first time these songs have been on vinyl, although they've been available digitally. Liquids mastermind Mat Williams has a pure punk rock'n'roll heart and he takes the traditional trappings and lowers the fidelity, more on some tracks than others. "Don't Give a Fuck About You" is the attitude, and that's there in spades. Almost all of 'em are loud, fast and snotty.

ERIK NERVOUS (real last name Hart), who is actually from Kalamazoo, MI and not Indiana, has a similarly minimalist bent. He also orders listeners to "stop calling it DEVO-core." Well, Erik has a point, because these songs won't make you think of the Spuds from O-H-I-O. The closest he comes to that is synth-driven track "(Do The) Simulate." If anything, he draws from the URINALS (who he covers) and early WIRE, along with jabbing post-punk ("Misfit Right In" sounds like DELTA 5). "&&&" is near pop. There are some offbeat cover versions—the somewhat obscure "Bridgeport Lathe," by the Boston band the 2x4'S, which is a longtime favorite song of mine. It sounds a bit off, but I'm impressed he (un)covered it (pun intended). His dismemberment of blues chestnut "I'm A Man" is also quite entertaining. For bedroom recordings, the fidelity isn't that low, either. Taken from a number of demos and 7"s on Total Punk and Neck Chop plus a few unreleased songs and only a small sampling of what he's released over the years. (neckchoprecords.com)

YOU WANT SOME MORE?

Two recent releases on Big Neck come from BASEBALL FURIES and FIRE HEADS. *All American Psycho* is a reissue of Furies' 1999 10" EP, adding on the four songs from their 1998 *Sounds Of Mayhem* 7" to add up to twelve inches of prime, raw 'n' nasty, garage punk. Distorted, nasally, vocals and a gnarled and barbed mess of low-fidelity slop. I mean that in the best possible way. Sure, "Rapid Fire Attack" borrows a little from "I Got a Right," but they condense it to a minute and a quarter of fury. "Last Man" is a cacophonous rave-up. And the four songs from the 7" are even rougher-sounding. To use a hoary reference from the movie where they took their name, time to come out and play. But watch out for the bats.

FIRE HEADS are another band with the involvement of the ever-busy / ubiquitous Bobby Hussy, who also recorded and mixed it. Their self-titled album incorporates strains of punk, garage, and even country / roots music. No acoustic guitars, though, except for the last track "Night Comes Again," an almost JANDEK-type solo guitar / vocal piece that eventually gets subsumed by feedback. Most of the songs are at a high-energy clip, providing a headlong rush, while also maintaining a melodic sensibility. Pretty good. (38977 Thomas Mill Rd., Leesburg, VA 20175, bigneckrecords.com)

BROWN SUGAR were one of the more interesting punk bands to come along over the past ten years, and they're memorialized on a pair of posthumous releases—the *Long Strange Drip* compilation (which is almost an hour long!), as well as *Adumdum*, a tape with more odds and ends, including a live set. *Long Strange Drip* collects the band's various 7"s and flexis, plus a few unreleased songs, starting with a rockin' cover of "Hey Joe." The tape features live material and various demo songs, including a cover of ANTIDOTE's rather racist "Foreign Job Lot." What makes it funny is the fact that their vocalist, Eddie, is an undocumented immigrant. BROWN SUGAR were always a wonderful mess, a cascade of punk, hardcore, garage, and rock'n'roll with a devil-may-care wittiness. Not that there wasn't a message with the madness—"Deportation" certainly deals with a serious topic. The sharp wit also comes out in the detailed liner notes written by their guitarist Brandon. There was an evolution over time as a good chunk of the earlier material had a thrashy emphasis but still exhibited a good amount of musical skill. They eventually broadened their horizons a bit, while always having a manic and frenetic edge. The aforementioned live set on *Adumdum*, recorded in Cleveland, has them going full-tilt but never falling into disarray. Considering that their shows were usually a wild scene, with Eddie charging around like a madman, that's quite an accomplishment. Never predictable and always potent. (Feral Kid, feralkidrecords.bigcartel.com; The Loki Label, thelokilabel.storeenvy.com)

LITHICS' second album *Mating Surfaces* is a dose of sharp, jabbing, art-punk or post-

punk or whatever hackneyed expression you want to use. Rock critic crutches for sure, but that's where this Portland, OR band are coming from. Tightly-executed compositions with busy instrumental interplay and Aubrey Hornor's detached-sounding vocals. At times, there's a UK flavor to them. "Still Forms" is reminiscent of FIRE ENGINES, for instance. "Boyce," meanwhile, has a No Wave flavor. Sometimes, they go for more of a straight-ahead punk sound, as with "Flat Rock" or "Dancing Guy," the latter of which also has some stop / start no wavish-flourishes. Nervy and edgy throughout. (Kill Rock Stars, killrockstars.com)

My *MRR* compatriot Allan McNaughton was nice enough to send along a pair of CDs, one featuring his former band GIANT HAYSTACKS and one with his latest unit NEUTRALS. *This Is All There Is* is anthology of the Haystacks' singles and EPs, plus one song recorded live on WFMU. A post-punk pulse but there were always melodic underpinnings, accompanying the dynamic, jabbing interplay. There's a familiarity in what you're hearing (MINUTEMEN, especially) but it wasn't a reenactment of their influences. GIANT HAYSTACKS mixed those with observational lyrics done in a non-sloganeering style. Singing instead of shouting out any sort of obvious buzz phrases. It's hard to believe it's been over a decade since this band existed, but the material still sounds fresh and brash. (gianthaystacks.bandcamp.com)

The NEUTRALS' *Promotional Compact Disk* is comprised of their 2016 and 2017 demos. This is a simpler, straightforward and tuneful approach as opposed to the post-punk angularity of GIANT HAYSTACKS (although that's a subtle element). Instead, it's a mainly different strain, taking more from late '70s UK, Rough Trade bands. Lyrical cleverness, as well—"Swiss" points out that while the band are "Neutrals," they are *not* Swiss, while tweaking some of that country's traditions (neutrality, Swiss Army knives, KLEENEX—the band, not the product). Once again, using the past as an inspiration but it's not a sepia-toned image. (neutrals.bandcamp.com)

The NO LOVE album is a collection of feverish and frenetic punk. There's melody but also a high bash quotient that keep the songs surging along. I hear a little bit of WHITE LUNG (without the gothic trappings) and BRAIN F≠, the latter due to the sonic dustcloud effect, and these are thrown into a hardcore swirl. Re-recordings of the two songs from their 2015 7" plus a cover of ISS's "Back Taxes & Anaphylaxis," given a rocked-up reading and riding an engaging guitar line. Three years since the 7" and worth the wait. The band includes Sorry State honcho Daniel Lupton. (sorrystaterecords.com)

STUN EVENT features three former members of Mass. hardcore legends OUT COLD—vocalist Keven Mertens and drummer John Evicci, plus guitarist Freddy Defecto adding some leads. Despite that pedigree, STUN EVENT don't really sound like that band. The songs here are herky-jerky hardcore compositions with odd time signatures. There's a post-punk or even jazzy sensibility, but it's something they incorporate instead of it being an obvious element. There aren't always standard song structures or the brevity has them moving on to the next one just about when you've gripped what's playing. In other words, it's fairly hookless, but the musicianship is sharp and intense. (Antitode: antixtodo@gmail.com, stunevent.bandcamp.com)

The PROLETARIAT are back with a two song 7", *The Murder Of Alton Sterling,* their first new recordings in over 30 years. 3/4 of the original lineup—Rick Brown, Peter Bevilaqua and Tom McKnight—are joined by new guitarist Don Sanders. Not exactly picking up where they left off, after their somber-sounding *Indifference* album (which was culled from different sessions). The two songs here are aggressive, in-your-face punk, with the title track a sub-two minute rage session ripped from the headlines, as they say, about an unarmed black man being gunned down by the police. "Push Back" infuses a post-punk pulse into a rocking arrangement. A good return and they've got more new material already in the pipeline. (Bridge Nine, bridge9.com)

TOZCOS' *Sueños Deceptivos* 12" is a barrage of rough hardcore punk *en Espanol.* They hail from Santa Ana, CA, but there are European punk influences, as well. Monse's vocals exude raspy rage and passion and the band sound muscular, with a warm, buzzing guitar tone. There's nuance, though, and darker, semi-goth, shadings emerge on "Ritmo De La Muerte" and there's also a near-four minute, intense, dirge in "Un Hogar." Most of the time, though, they play at a mid-to-fast clip and avoid having the "all the songs sound the same" syndrome. Solid live band too. (Verdugo, verdugodiscos.storenvy.com)

Slime Demon is the first release in over three years from Chicago crew TV SLIME and their second 7" overall. It's a riff monster, much heavier than their debut. Crushing, punk-driven AmRep style rock, in the same ballpark as a band like METZ, only meaner-sounding. Three sturdy mid-tempo blasts plus one speed bomb ("Timber"). Ugly and crushing. (Byaaaaaah!, tvslime.bandcamp.com)

Finally, GEN POP are an Olympia band with Maryjane and Ian from VEXX. The first two songs on their latest 7", *II,* "Oh No" and "No Change," are loud 'n' fast hardcore chargers. Just when you think this is going to be pure rage, they go do a near 180 into the moody 'n' brooding "Plastic Comb" and follow that with the art-punk attack of "Waxing State." Then it's back to the hardcore races for "No Identify" (part of it, at least) and then another dose of jarring art-punk. Quite a ride and it keeps you guessing as to what will come next. (Feel It, PO Box 25045, Richmond, VA 23260, feelitrecordshop.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com; sonicoverload.net; subvox.blogspot.com

Narcotic Apartheid

I haven't gone one full day in the past year without hearing some anecdote about The Opioid Epidemic and it's starting to drive me insane. It gets exhausting being bombarded with these stories every day while simultaneously holding this constant internal conversation about the nature of media attention being placed on drug users all of a sudden.

On the one hand, hell yeah I'm glad people are finally being treated like humans and the war on drugs is starting to evolve into something slightly more humane. On the other hand, why is this happening now? And at whose expense? Why has America suddenly realized that incarceration is not an effective response to addiction? Why does every story revolve around the implied novelty of death within unassuming middle / upper class white families? Now we are having a national dialogue about addiction as a disease and a public health problem rather than a criminal one. Where were these policy initiatives in the '80s when crack was running rampant in Black neighborhoods or in the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s when the majority of heroin users were Black?

In 2016, white Americans accounted for almost 80% of overdose deaths. Shit is indeed out of hand and commensurate

media attention is warranted. No one should have to go through the experience of losing a loved one to an overdose. But hell, all it took was scores of rich white kids ODing to get America to mature to a more humane response to opioid addiction? I'm personally offended that journalists think they're fooling anyone with their glaring, thinly veiled code-switching. "Heroin"=urban=Black+brown ppl; "Painkillers"=white; "Suburban"=white; "The new face of drug addiction"=white; "It can happen to anyone"= It can happen to white people.

I've created a basic key to interpreting the penalization approach of yesteryear by today's public health parlance:

2018 // 1990
Disease of addiction // Moral Failing
Drug user // Addict
Addict // Criminal
Intervention // Incarceration
Drug crisis // Drug war
Drug treatment // Mandatory Minimum
Supervised Consumption Site // Crack House
Victim // Perpetrator

Today's news stories depict the tragedy of suburban (read: white) death and the heartbreaking loss of potential that goes with it. In these stories, people's history and struggles are humanized. There are photos of happier times and of families left behind; there's contextualization. There's no explicit mention of race because that would be too gauche, and anyway whiteness should be assumed. White addiction is nearly always blamed on external factors; "suffered an injury," "victim of predatory pharmaceutical prescribing," "fell in with a 'bad crowd.'" He was a good kid. She was a straight A student. He was headed to college in the fall. Black and brown drug addiction isn't talked about in these terms because it's considered the status quo and not news.

And policy follows the media. The earliest stages of public opinion are programmed by news framing. In 2016, Maine Gov. Paul LePage, New England's reigning cretin supreme, publicly stated, "There are guys with the name D-Money, Smoothie, Shifty—these types of guys—they come from Connecticut and New York, they come up here, they sell their heroin, they go back home. Incidentally, half the time they impregnate a young white girl before they leave." That's quite a sobering statement for a speech about drugs.

In 2017, Dr. Helena Hanson of NYU and Dr. Julie Netherland of the The Drug Policy Alliance conducted a content analysis of 100 popular press articles from 2001 and 2011. Half of the articles focused on heroin users and the other half on prescription opioid users. Their research affirmed a glaring disparity between the way journalists distinguished white drug addiction vs. Black and Latino drug addiction. Articles on urban (i.e. Black) drug addiction were essentially arrest records or disproportionately referenced incarceration, without providing any background. Only one article on urban (i.e. Black) addiction mentioned drug treatment. Articles about white drug addiction consistently mentioned education, treatment, prevention, drug take-backs, and overprescribing.

The researchers culminate their findings with, *"The popular press is helping to create a form of* narcotic apartheid *that is inscribed not only on divergent narratives of the human qualities, family, and community lives of white compared to black or brown addicted people, but that is also inscribed on racially divergent legal codes and local, State and Federal policies."* (Hanson, Netherland 2017—emphasis by me). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the authors also found that socioeconomic status, substance of choice, and geographic location of white fatalities determined how these groups were coded in the media and signaled a corresponding level of sympathy.

Black people constitute 15% of America's drug users but account for 37% of drug arrests. Moreover, Black Americans account for 59% of those convicted for drug-related offenses, and 74% of those sentenced to prison. In sum, 15% of the drug using population accounts for 74% of the prison population. When Reagan declared drugs to be Public Enemy Number One, the rate of incarceration immediately jumped 800% and has since climbed even higher. The vast majority of that increase was among Black men and women.

Probably the most glaring example of racially stratified drug policy is the age-old disparity in crack v. cocaine sentencing. For those who don't know, crack is powder cocaine with baking soda. People can consume coke in any number of different ways, but in essence it's all still the same drug. So far as politicians and the media are concerned, crack=Black, cocaine=white. Up until 2010, crack carried 100x more jail time than cocaine. While 500 grams of powder cocaine would result in a 5 year mandatory minimum. It would take only 5 grams of crack to be charged with the same sentence. As of 2018, it's still 18:1.

However, white people and POC use drugs at roughly equal levels, and crack is no exception. Approximately 66% of crack users are white or Hispanic, yet 80% of crack defendants are Black. These laws have always been purported to target big-time distributors, but 73% of crack charges fall on the peons of the drug trade; lookouts, street dealers, runners.

But now police stations throughout the country are becoming free zones where people can come in and get treatment on demand without fear of arrest, even if they're carrying. We talk about drug treatment and "the disease of addiction" instead of incarceration. There's unprecedented discussion about opioid addiction reaching across the aisle in congress. You can get Naloxone over the counter in many states—you can even get it for free from overdose prevention programs. By the way, Narcan was approved by the FDA in 1971—when heroin users were still primarily Black. We have publicly elected officials talking about SCS in major cities in America. Netherland and Hanson say it most succinctly in their aforementioned media analysis, *"This less examined 'White drug war' has carved out a less punitive, clinical realm for Whites where their drug use is decriminalized, treated primarily as a biomedical disease, and where their whiteness is preserved, leaving intact more punitive systems that govern the drug use of people of color."*

Public health interventions, though well intentioned, can exacerbate existing inequalities. This is especially true if they are applied on a universal or "color-blind" (not a real thing) scale. For example, anti-smoking campaigns have had a lot of success in the past decade, but much more so in wealthier circles. These efforts have had a lot less of an impact in low-income communities. So richer, whiter, communities with more access to health care are lowering their risks associated with smoking, and the health gap amplifies. This is an example of an intervention-generated inequality.

There's also the Inverse Care Law, which is a phenomenon where health services are more concentrated and easy to access in richer, whiter communities. The people who need healthcare the most are less likely to have insurance, have a local and affordable primary care doctor or specialist, etc. This is especially true when the market is privatized such as it is in this country. Public health workers and politicians should do an analysis of the equity implications of proposed interventions to make sure they're not making matters worse. It helps to ensure that marginalized people aren't getting shit on more than they already are.

This method has obviously not been applied to overdose or substance use prevention. Harsh drug sentencing has been demolishing Black and brown communities for decades. In several major cities, more than half of Black men are court-involved. Added to the emotional toll this takes on a family, it's also disastrous for health. Formerly incarcerated people are significantly less likely to attain gainful employment with benefits like health insurance. Not to mention that low-income single parents often have to work two or three minimum wage, part time jobs and can't take off time to stand around in line at a free clinic

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all day without facing job termination. Sex work and other criminalized endeavors, which carry significant health implications as is, are often the only option, which perpetuates the cycle further. While some growth in public support for more liberalized drug policy does benefit everyone, Black and brown drug use is still heavily criminalized and makes the health disparity ~100,000x worse.

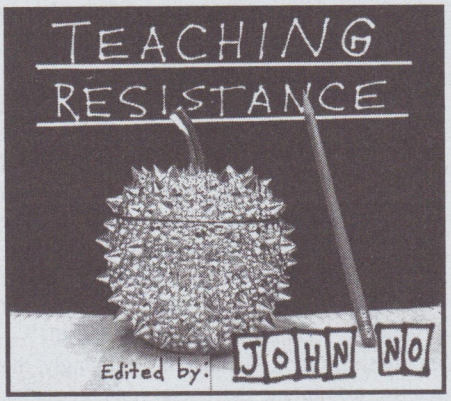
Media representation matters *a lot* because of casual racism, but more specifically, structural inequality. For example, even after getting accepted into college, which we all know is a process that disproportionately filters out Black and brown people from day one, minority students are less able to forgo paychecks for months or even years at an unpaid internship than white people. Even when they can, they are less likely to obtain the competitive, coveted, internships that employers often look for. Statistically, ethnic and racial minorities interested in journalism are more likely to attend universities that don't even have newspapers. And if they do, they are less likely to join them.

And, probably more important than all else, it's all about who you know. POC are less likely to have social or professional networks, which often lead white people to employment. Black and brown people are less likely to find themselves swirling a glass of scotch with Brad from XYZ media conglomerate and his wife Becky who used to summer in the Hamptons with their parents.

So who are these agenda-setters behind the curtain? In 2014, racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 37.4% of the US population, but only 22.4% of TV newscasters, and about 13% of both radio and newspaper journalists. And it's not for lack of trying. Alex T. WIlliams at UPenn found that minorities accounted for only 21.4% of journalism and communications degree-earners between 2004-2014. Although 2/3rds of white students were able to obtain full-time employment, only half of their minority counterparts were able to do the same. Non-white students who studied public relations journalism were 25% less likely to obtain full time employment.

In short, even though most news sources aren't explicitly promulgating a white supremacist agenda, they lack the adequate representation to inform stories in a balanced way in an increasingly diverse nation. News media programs the agenda. Journalists decide what is worthy of attention, and right now that's the death of suburban white kids. If you're a passive consumer of news media like most of America, you don't know what you don't know.

I'm interested to hear your thoughts about the intersection of race and drug use in the media. What are your experiences? Or do you have funny / sad / neutral and / or compelling story about drugs you want to share with the world of *MRR*? Do you want to guest write this column? Tell me your darkest secrets @ dearauntiehazel@gmail.com



One of the most potent political weapons / tactics of the 21st century is doxxing, the public spreading of personal information (address, full name, place of employment, phone number, etc.) of people who are then potentially targeted for harassment—or worse—by anyone who picks up on that information, thus covering the harasser's tracks and keeping the spreader of the information at arm's length from direct responsibility for such actions. While this tactic is used widely in the United States by reactionaries on the right and radicals on the left end of the spectrum to attack those they view as political opponents, it has undoubtedly been employed to its greatest and most-dangerous effect by those on the ascendant, emboldened neo-fascist far right.

The far right, including their myriad of well-funded, near-mainstream level media outlets and provocateurs, is fully aware that many of its adherents and ideological cohort are physically violent, intensely prejudiced / bigoted, emotionally unstable, gullible to authoritarian suggestion, desperate, and heavily-armed. The apocalyptic rhetoric spewed by these figures (i.e. Alex Jones's constant carping about a looming civil war), combined with the mindset of their adherents, leads to a feedback loop of paranoia, open manipulation of facts, employment of dirty tricks to whip up rightist fervor / support, and an underlying willingness to use deadly force. This toxic and potentially deadly combination has resulted in a consistent and ever-rising death and serious injury toll inflicted by right-wing actors upon leftists, doxxing targets, and bystanders over the last decade. In contrast, left-wing doxxing actions commonly focus on social censure such as letting employers know they hired a Nazi (wouldn't you want to know?), while the death toll created by leftist actors in the last decade hovers around zero and serious injuries inflicted on even the nastiest fascists are minimal (unless you want to add up the bruises from two million Richard-Spencer-Getting-Punched GIFs).

Organized right wing groups and media are fully aware of the potential physical consequences of what might happen when they doxx people to their followers; they profit from the frenzy they whip up and are fully invested (if not technically liable for) the literal terrorism that occurs as a result. This month's Teaching Resistance column is by Lucy Isadora, a punk and a college student in Mississippi who is pursuing a self-designed major in Educational Justice. In 2017, Lucy was one of the targets of a coordinated doxxing attack by right wing media over, essentially, nothing.

Back in April of 2017, a group of friends and I were mourning the impending death of our favorite building on campus, the Christian Center, scheduled for a complete gut and remodel over the summer. The Christian Center housed not only a chapel and the religious studies department, but also the history department, some classrooms, an auditorium, and a student lounge, where I helped lead weekly Shabbat ceremonies with the Jewish student group. Remembering all the fun and growth we'd had over our years of taking classes, writing papers, and enjoying each other's company in it, we "left our mark" by getting together and painting up the room that was most special to us, the Christian Center lounge, the Friday before the building was to be closed. People painted some great stuff on those walls: quotes from *Donnie Darko*, pictures of fried eggs, Latin and Arabic text, inspirational quotes, musings on insects. I painted a message encouraging people to submit to my zine. Someone even brought old cut-up issues of National Geographic and decoupaged serene photos of pigs onto the wall. We also did some of the usual painting-on-walls imagery, your standard pictures of genitalia, "Fuck Trump," et cetera. We meant no harm to anyone, of course. Our paintings certainly had a political streak, but they were not all political, nor were they all anti-Trump (other students in other rooms had their MAGA fun, too).

We took photos and posted them all over Facebook and Instagram. Briefly, in the week immediately following, they came down because we were worried that school administrators were going to pursue disciplinary action against us. But so many students had come through the unlocked building to paint in their favorite rooms over the weekend, that by the time administration noticed, there were too many culprits to even begin to catch. A couple of professors involved were called in to figure out what happened, but

no one was kicked out or fired. Our work was simply painted over, so the photos went back up. That memory remains one of my favorites of undergrad, and I loved revisiting that happy moment by looking back at photos and videos we took.

Almost an entire year later, on a Monday in February of 2018, I woke up to a text from a friend who was there with me. The text was just a link to an article titled "CAMPUS INSANITY: CHRISTIAN CENTER VANDALIZED WITH ANTI-TRUMP GRAFFITI, INCIDENT 'SWEPT UNDER THE RUG'" on an alt-right news site called Big League Politics. I tapped through, and those photos we took were everywhere. According to the article, an anonymous conservative classmate of mine tipped off the author to this case of "conservative oppression" at school, apparently dissatisfied with the lack of punishment for what they perceived to be strictly political graffiti. When they asked administration what was done about the painting, they were told what any student inquiring about a disciplinary process not involving them is told: that's confidential. What the article failed to mention is that in keeping with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, my school doesn't release information about disciplinary proceedings except to victims or courts. Thus, the student was left to assume that absolutely no action was taken.

This student also sent in four photos of my friends and me, the ones we took and posted to social media ourselves. They singled out a professor in the photos as particularly anti-Trump, and so the article published his full name and photos of him, along with screenshots of anti-Trump Facebook posts from his private account. The college's director of communications is quoted in the article saying our painting was hurtful, offensive, and uncivil. Many of the details were wrong, most glaringly that it framed the space we painted as just "a Christian center", as if we'd painted "Fuck Trump" on Jesus himself, when it was actually an academic building that was nearly closed.

My friends and I would never have seen this article, except that an alum of the school sent an email to a random-seeming listserv of admissions staff, faculty, alumni, librarians, and bookstore staff with a link to the article and a message calling for our disciplining. The article itself had been published on a Saturday, so by the time we saw it on Monday, the story had begun making the rounds on other alt-right news sites, local news sites, local gossip blogs, and conservative forums. All in all, our photos ended up on about ten different websites, including popular young adult-focused alt-right sites Campus Reform and Turning Points USA. This is not to mention Facebook and Twitter, where my classmates, alumni, and even a state representative were sharing the link all day with their own opinions on whether or not we were behaving civilly. My college issued several press releases and sent emails to the entire campus and alumni community all week. Every one of those emails threw us under the bus, said we were not representative of the college, and refused to acknowledge the nature of the "news" sites as bigoted and hyper-conservative.

The day after the story started getting around, I had a stress headache all day that seemed completely impervious to Advil. I hardly slept all week and ate even less. As the article spread from site to site, the comments got worse and worse. Most of them targeted the women in the photos, calling us names, commenting on our looks and our weight. Folks called us fetishists and addicts. People called for us to be fired and expelled. One person inexplicably thought we should be spanked. I stopped keeping up for the sake of my mental health, and then a friend alerted me that my Google Photos account had been linked in the comments of one of the blogs, likely found via Facebook. My name (as well as the names of the other students) had previously been uninvolved, and now my full name and every photo of the incident I had was out for the world to see. I deleted my social media for a couple of weeks, but I hardly felt safer. The professor whose name was mentioned fielded angry emails and phone calls all week, forcing him to work from home for several days. I did all the damage control I could among my peers, but rumors are pervasive on an 800-person campus. Would we be punished? Would people come and protest at school? Would the professors be fired? I was always pretty sure the answer was "no," but I was getting virtually no communication from administration and couldn't be sure.

It was the most afraid I have been in my adult life. I felt violated and scared, unable to have any control over the spread of my image across the alt-right internet. As a Jewish person, I was raised with what I consider to be a perfectly reasonable phobia of Nazis, and now Nazis everywhere were sharing and commenting on photos of me and people I love dearly. Most people in the photos were visible in a way that endangered them; we were a group of brown folks, queer folks, non-Christian folks, and women. It felt like being hunted. We were all scared.

At the end of it all, administration didn't decide to "reopen our case" and punish the students, despite apparent calls for that exact thing from alumni and trustees. They also never once publicly recognized the danger that we were all put in. I was never offered so much as a word of comfort or a check-in until I sought it out, though I'm told the story was different for some folks affected. Most of the professors and administrators I talked to expressed sympathy while also giving me some variation on the "well, you shouldn't have broken a rule and posted about it on social media" speech. I did nothing to deserve having my safety and privacy violated in the way that it was.

About a month after the fact, the professor who was singled out in the article was called in by the academic dean. As a direct punishment for the incident, his pay was sabotaged, he was removed as chair of his department, and he was no longer allowed to teach classes abroad. Never once did the school publicly acknowledge that it was a student of his who caused all the bad PR in the first place. At Shabbat that week, we talked about it, how thankful we were that most of our names were never involved, how grateful we were that our Jewishness was never involved, how hurt and betrayed we all felt. My professor put it this way—it felt like being robbed for a million dollars, but you only have a thousand, so the robbers just take your thousand, and you're just grateful that they didn't take the million you never had.

Now, five months after the fact, I'm beginning to understand that my situation was not an isolated one. Organizations like Turning Point USA tell conservative students that their voices are silenced on college campuses. They encourage students to send in "tips" on people who "discriminate" against conservative students, take video of protests on campus, photograph anything that might make a story. That kind of mob mentality turned some pretty harmless college graffiti into an all-out PR disaster that endangered me and people I love. Students from all across the country have had the exact same thing happen to them, frequently in much more dangerous situations than mine was. Turning Point USA even has a professor watch list that they publish the names and institutions of professors who offend—students are encouraged to report their professors. Sometimes institutions respond well, protecting students and professors from harm. Sometimes they respond the way mine did, treating it as a legitimate scandal and punishing people who were already endangered.

I will always wish that someone on my campus outside the situation had loudly called attention to the context of the whole issue. Some harmless activities my friends and I participated in were written into being crimes, and it hurt all of us. It worked my whole community into a frenzy of asking who was right or wrong, when really they should have been asking why it was a scandal in the first

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place. If and when you see this issue touch your campus, that is the best thing you can do to support folks being targeted. Reach out. Check in. Change the narrative and ensure the people around you know that being doxxed for harmless actions is not normal and not okay. Speak up to your colleagues and peers as well as administrators. Do it in real life and on social media. The conversation can't be about what folks who were doxxed did wrong—it has to be about why the mob mentality is not okay.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education, particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com.

—John No, Teaching Resistance editor

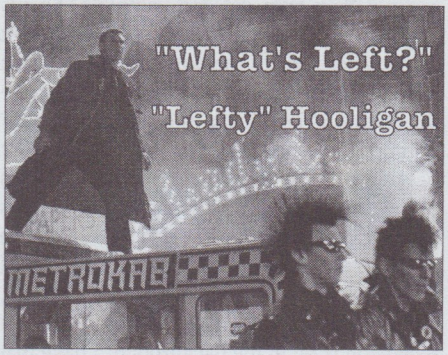
Detroit's F.U.K. (FUCKED UP KIDS) existed as the briefest of blips on the radar of the early American punk underground, when there was no lack of short-lived primitive provocateurs leaving a trail of cassettes and one-and-done singles behind in their wake that would form the basis of countless *Bloodstains* and *Killed by Death* comps in the years to come. The twist here is that F.U.K. featured a pre-MISSION OF BURMA Roger Miller and shared a close association with local anti-rock rabble-rousers DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, but the two songs on Hozac's new archival *Detroit 1977* 7" stand on their own as flipped-out, punk, genius regardless of that historical context. F.U.K. never released any proper recordings during their micro-existence (they allegedly only ever played one live show), and both sides of the single were sourced from tapes pulled out of the archives of punk archivist extraordinaire Byron Coley, which just goes to show that history is never really a closed book if you're willing to dig deep enough for those hidden footnotes. "Roadkill" is about as diametrically opposite to MISSION OF BURMA's tightly-wound, cerebral post-punk as you can get, with Sue Rynski shouting in a sneering deadpan that *"nothing tastes better than fresh roadkill!"* over Miller's bare bones two-chord guitar blitz and totally smashed drumming. It's messy and brilliant and deserves a spot alongside the MAGGOTS' "(Let's Get, Let's Get) Tammy Wynette" or the lone single from Austin's FOAMS in the pantheon of late '70s / early '80s falling-apart femme punk classics. On the flip, the Miller-sung "I Got A Head" is a slice of off-kilter, psych-damaged weirdo DIY that connects the dots between the raw Midwestern neurosis of *Hardcore*-era DEVO and the freewheeling and self-taught noisy glee of HALF JAPANESE, both of whom were operating in a similar mindset of truly freaking out squares in '77. Truly a diamond rescued from the rough. (Hozac, fukfuckedupkids.bandcamp.com)

Last year's excellent *What Is the Mystery of Love?* cassette from Austin trio CHRONOPHAGE reimagined SWELL MAPS-ish collapsing post-punk by way of the blown-out experiments of the more clamorous corners of '80s New Zealand pop underground (think TALL DWARFS or most of the output of the Xpressway label). Their latest tape, *Give Chance a Peace*, was put together for a recent West Coast summer tour, and it's just as charmingly shambolic, although the group's prior leanings toward both melody and noise are pulled in increasingly separate directions this time around. The first side is clearly the "pop" side, as evidenced by the sweetly-sung, frayed-edge cover of the VELVET UNDERGROUND's "I'll Be Your Mirror" that points to one very likely source of inspiration for CHRONOPHAGE's cracked DIY psychedelia and slightly askew melodies. There are no song titles included for the originals on here, but the opening track is particularly great, as bassist Sarah delivers lines like *"nothing, nothing, nothing ever really happens"* with an effortlessly cool casual detachment over wiry, tangled guitar lines and jittery drumming. On the second side, the band turns down a more abstract path of repetitive DEAD C-esque drones and largely instrumental keyboard and drum machine-driven clatter—'70s Krautrock meets '00s shitgaze, perhaps? Each half of the tape is a total trip in its own way, and I'm definitely excited for the CHRONOPHAGE LP that's apparently due for release later this year. (cchhrroonnoopphhaaggee.bandcamp.com)

Now that we're a few years removed from peak CONEHEADS / CCTV mania, the expectations for what a new DIY punk band from Northwest Indiana would sound like in 2018 are likely far less rigid. I haven't heard too much chatter yet about PENTAS, and that's not such a bad thing, as it seems like they're probably able to do their own thing and evolve at their own pace without being subject to the watchful eyes and short attention spans of viral hype. The six-song demo that they released in early June has absolutely no trace of DEVO influence to be found, opting instead for a lo-fi, scrappy punk, aesthetic like a slightly less loopy KLEENEX or a slightly more art-minded version of the NIXE, with perfectly dry, deadpan, recitations and ecstatic shrieks from vocalist Tessa (who also plays one of the two basses in the group). There's also a slight hint of sass in PENTAS's sub-two minute bursts of stripped-down slash and burn that reminds me of MIKA MIKO, who were similarly adept at walking the narrow tightrope between frantic thrash and urgent danceability. A really strong debut, and I wouldn't be surprised if they play a crucial part in shifting the spotlight back on the NWI underground this year. (pentas.bandcamp.com)

TABLE SUGAR have been pretty much ruling the Pacific Northwest for the past year or so—their presence now seems to be more or less mandatory on any bill featuring a current DIY punk band worthy your attention who happens to be passing through Olympia, and with good reason. Their wonderful *Introductory Material* cassette from last year took some basic lessons from the minimalist, hodge-podge post-punk scrawl of the RAINCOATS and the women of the late '70s / early '80s Rough Trade axis, who fully embraced the concept that anything and everything is possible within the span of a song. That tape is now available as an LP courtesy of Water Wing Records, and a brand new 12" called *Collected Acknowledgements* appeared more or less simultaneously on the just-launched Olympia label Stucco. *Collected Acknowledgements* switches out *Introductory Material*'s occasional creaky violin scrapes with some slightly surreal percolating keyboard, but otherwise, TABLE SUGAR are still crafting the same playful and skeletal racket out of little more than joyously overlapping vocal incantations, rubbery twist-and-turn bass, hopscotch drum patterns, and scritch-scratch guitar lines. It's a sound that's simultaneously jumbled and precise, following zig-zagging, unpredictable paths that somehow always end up exactly where they're supposed to lead. New wave for the now, and your acquisition of both records should be mandatory. (tablesugarband.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



I light candles for the people in my life who've died. It comes from my Catholic upbringing, and any opportunity I get to visit a church with a votive stand—whether Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, or even Buddhist—I light candles. But it doesn't have any spiritual meaning beyond ritual. There's no "I'm spiritual but not religious" bullshit for me. I'm a recovering Catholic striving for atheism on a good day. On a bad day I'm a feeble agnostic.

My parents were never really churchgoing. When my sister and I were up for the childhood sacraments of penance, communion, and confirmation we had to go to Sunday School, learn the catechism, and attend mass. But after receiving them, my parents no longer required church participation of us. When my mom got small cell lung cancer, my dad started attending mass again, praying for a miracle. After a course of chemo, one night my mom got into the family car, drove to an unknown house, knocked on the door, asked if my father was there, then drove home when she learned he wasn't. A month and a half after she died of the cancer, my dad died of a heart attack. Despite my irreligion, I'm haunted by John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many mansions. [...] I go to prepare a place for you."

"The meaning of life is that it stops." —Franz Kafka

My parents died in their 60s. Having gone through the second World War, their respective families in Poland were decimated. So the death of my uncle, aunt, and niece in Chicago virtually eliminated the American side of my family. My wife's parents died in their 80s, although her extended family remains quite large. Now that I'm 65, many of my friends and acquaintances are around my age or older, and I'm having to attend more and more funerals and memorials. We hosted a memorial in April for a friend of my wife who she knew for over 40 years.

But I've been lucky. I wasn't born and raised in poverty, or with daily domestic violence, or in a war zone, so the death of people close around me wasn't a regular occurrence. Throughout my schooling I personally knew maybe three individuals my age who died. The last was David Pickett, a UCSD student who was one of the most active members of an independent Leftist student newspaper called "The New Indicator" to which I belonged. He was also a drinking buddy of mine. In researching San Diego politics from 1979 to 1981 for a recent column in various UCSD digital archives (*MRR* #419), I came across details of his death. He "was injured in a road accident while vacationing in Mexico over the Spring break. It was a long drive to the nearest hospital, but he was still alive when he arrived. The hospital, however, was a private one and David was refused treatment because his ability to pay was in question. En route to a public hospital he died." The description of David's death concluded with the comment that his life "just wasn't as important as the profit column in the hospital ledger."

The article concluded with an angry rant against capitalism. People die every day in car accidents, factories, wars, and being "turned away from hospitals all the time in the U.S., in Mexico, everywhere in the world where hospitals must yield a profit." "Our system maximizes profit; and profit and human welfare are two very different things. [...] We remember David; we don't think he had to die. Those who agree with us should help us oppose the system that prefers profit to life." (https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb0239978w/_1.pdf) Forty years later, I chose to remember David Pickett's death by crafting his life into a "riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma" as a longish short story that I then converted into a prequel to my science fiction novel, *1% Free*. Such are the advantages of fiction over fact in capturing truths not immediately evident in reality.

"Being alone, reading voraciously, writing this memoir, I've done a lot of thinking, and I believe the constant, underlying thought of all men who think must be of their own death, no matter what the surface thought might be. When they think of living, they are also thinking of death, for the two are mingled. And thinking is a curse." —Edward Bunker, *No Beast So Fierce*

The three things I've been most interested in as an adult—politics, writing, and rock'n'roll—all have a higher-than-average mortality rate. Practicing politics can lead to an early grave under authoritarian regimes, or in the US if you have the wrong skin color and are a particularly effective leftist activist. Such was the case with Malcolm X, Bobby Hutton, Martin Luther King, Fred Hampton, and scores more. Writers experience a greater incidence of early death thanks to their propensity for substance abuse due either to the mistaken belief it's a necessary part of the creative process or to overall depression from thinking too much. My list of great alcoholic writers includes Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Jack Kerouac, and Hunter S. Thompson, but it would almost be easier to enumerate those writers who didn't drink themselves to death. Unlike my ineffectual political activism or my alcohol abuse, however, I've never been more than a fan of rock'n'roll. I was never a musician. I never played an instrument or was part of a band.

The youth lifestyle and culture associated with rock'n'roll music also kills more people than the wife-two-kids-a-dog-and-a-house-in-the-suburbs middle class life to which most normies aspire. Jim Carroll made that the subtext of his song "People Who Died," heavily cribbing its Catholic sensibilities from Ted Berrigan's poem of the same name, with its final line "My friends whose deaths have slowed my heart stay with me now." In turn, the band DETENTION had fun skewering the infamous 27 Club meme in "Dead Rock 'n Rollers." It was mere coincidence when Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Brian Jones, and Jimi Hendrix all died of drug overdoses at 27 years old, but it seemed like a genuine curse when Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse joined their ranks. *"And what about you, Jim Carroll? / All your friends have / What are you waiting for?" Detention* asked in 1983, with Carroll eventually joining those dead rockers in 2009.

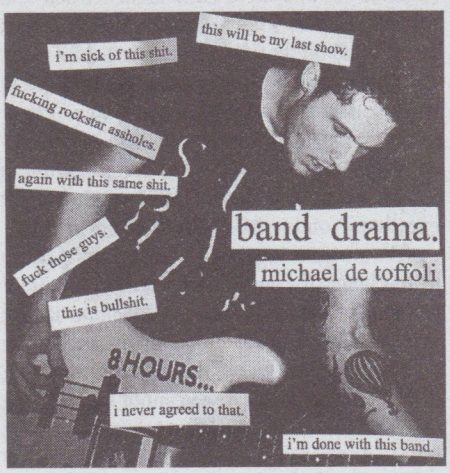
"We are ignoring the fact that bringing death to the level of consciousness is an important element of mental health ... *Hagakure* insists that to ponder death daily is to concentrate daily on life. When we do our work thinking that we may die today, we cannot help feeling that our job suddenly becomes radiant with life and meaning." —Yukio Mishima, *The Way of the Samurai*

I've had a dozen risky close-to-death experiences and a couple of health crisis incidents in my life that made me suddenly aware I was alive, and glad to be alive. But there needs to be some other way to value life than to flirt with death.

Paul Haller, the abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, once advised me in a private consultation to "meditate on death" as a way to appreciate life. By the way, that very same attitude toward death is why Zen was the religion of the Samurai, why Japan's Zen denominations wholeheartedly supported the Emperor throughout WWII, and why zen mindfulness is used as therapy for PTSD by the US military. Because it's also part-and-parcel of the Zen attitude toward the military, taking life, war, and the like. That's a subject for a future column however. I'll have turned 66 by the publication of this column, and thinking about death has become frequent. I'm by nature an introverted, introspective, person who frequently thinks about my life, what I have and haven't done, and what my dwindling future holds. My loved ones,

friends, frenemies, and enemies are all getting old and infirm. Some have already died. So, given that I'm also a little OCD, meditating on death has become a daily occurrence.

Mainstream US culture, which is heavily influenced by white Protestants, doesn't deal well with death and dying. We have no dominant ceremonial holidays like the festive Mexican Catholic Dia de los Muertos or the somber Jewish Yom Kippur and few personal rituals like my candle lighting practice to comfort us. *"Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die"* according to that popular country western song lyric. But in not believing in heaven, what I'm left with is not wanting to die. I haven't made up my mind whether thinking about death helps me feel more alive or that thinking itself is a curse. "And who shall I say is calling?"



I believe that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship. Your bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner. There will be many times that you'll spend more time with your bandmates than your partner and your partner will get jealous, and vice versa. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together all these things need to be addressed. That's what this column is here for: to discuss why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. In almost every way, this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

I've been blowing it lately, and I'm aware of that. I recently got a new job that's very time consuming and demanding, and at the end of the day I'm mentally and socially drained. I know myself, and at times like these if I give myself the option of hiding in my room away from everyone else I'll take it. I think that's common for introverts, and I've learned to be very aware of that and stay on top of it. I lost a few years of my life to hiding in my room, and I'm not going to let that happen again. So in some ways, you could call me a "flake," which is true. If I'm socially tapped out for the day and I cancel plans, I am indeed "flaking." The worst part is that I'd have every intention of going, but as the hours creep up I'd psych myself out and only decide to bail at the last possible second, prolonging the failure and disappointment in the people that are waiting for me. I've been good for a few years now, pushing myself out of the house before I can get in my own head and find enough excuses to stay, but these last six weeks I've been letting myself off the hook too much. Ironically I only started noticing it when I saw it reflected in my bandmates. Two weeks in a row I've had to "work late" even though the truth was that I just didn't have it in me that night, and they understood. The third week I was finally feeling ready and one of them had an issue that came up, and we all understood. The following week the same thing, and we all understood. We've rescheduled practices for a different night, and even cleared it with the other bands that we share our studio with to have that extra night, and then still flaked. I can only speak for myself, but I see the pattern in them.

When we're on track, we look forward to rehearsals, especially when we have something on the horizon. In the summer, we play a lot of shows because we like to hook up touring bands, so it feels like every time we get together it's just to run through the set. After enough times doing that, we feel like we don't need that anymore, and it's easy to just call it. We're at our best when we're writing, and we hold ourselves accountable more. So when we're writing I don't want to be left out of the process and I'm more likely to make sure that I don't miss it. If we're just running through the set before the show, I'm likely to convince myself that they can do it without me, and honestly, we could all just do that at home. If we're playing a new song, or a song that we haven't played for a few years then I need that reminder, but I also see that being a bass player I can do that on my own time at home.

Shit. Just then when I was writing that thought down, I heard what I was saying and it pissed me off. I sound so entitled. "I'm just the bass player, so I don't need to practice with y'all, I can just do it at home." What an asshole thing to say! First off, it's disrespectful to the instrument (and yes I know it's easy to make *bass player* jokes, and shit like this is the reason why, honestly.) If I'm actually thinking that the band can function without me and I only need to show up when it's convenient, then the band doesn't need me in order to function and I don't deserve to be in the band. And it's true, when I can't make it they bum out and complain. So it's not like I'm worthless. They can do it, but that's super rude to them to expect that from them. Secondly, yes, as the bass player I have the luxury of practicing in my bedroom. Our drummer doesn't have that luxury. He can't be transporting his whole kit back to his place, setting it up, and banging on it in his apartment. His roommates and everyone else in his building definitely wouldn't be cool with that. Meanwhile, I can sit on my bed, not plugged in, going over my parts while the television is on in the background; I have that privilege, and it's unfair to flaunt it. Finally, the most important thing is that when I flake on them I'm sacrificing our band's chemistry. The more I learn the music on my own, the less I listen to them. I've always relied on drums for cues, and I prefer it. That way if anything happens, like someone gets lost or fucks up, or there's technically issues with our gear or the house's, the most important thing is that the rhythm section is solid. If anything happens, they need to know that we'll keep the song going. When they figure it out and get back on track they can follow us and get back into the song so we don't miss a step. If I'm practicing on my own I'm training myself to only focus on what I'm doing, and if I'm not practicing with the whole band they're training themselves to not rely on me. That's not how a band functions.

With all that said, I do need to take my mental and emotional well being into account, but now that I've laid my recent tendencies out in front of me it's the kick in the ass that I've needed. Yes, if it's going to be harmful for me to push myself socially too much during this transition period in my life then I need to take self care seriously, but fuck, if I'm just, tired then drink some coffee or something bruh. If I'm drained I can still go to practice and just be quiet and introverted that night. It's better for the band as a whole for them to think I'm being weird then for us to compromise our chemistry. And if I set the expectation that it's OK to flake all the time then they'll follow suit and suddenly we're all not taking the band seriously. So, I'm sorry for being an asshole, seriously. From now on I will absolutely make more of an effort to come through for y'all. I'm going through a personal transition period, but that doesn't mean that the band has to as well.

Each month BAND DRAMA will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. If you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general (anonymously or not) reach out to banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past fourteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended or failed. I'd like to think that I've grown from each, learned from

each, and taken the time to reflect on each failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing and I always will be. So I want to share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.

MEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, INCELS, & NICE GUYS: THEIR DIFFERENCES AND COMMON GROUND

The "nice guy," "incel" (involuntary celibate), and Men's Rights Activist (MRA) lurk in hidden crevices of the internet and throughout Reddit and 4chan. While there are times in which they take their disgruntled shit-talking into your DMs, the looming delusional narrative of "women are trash" spins from the URL into IRL—manifesting in real life domestic terror attacks from Columbine to Parkland. Western society remains capitalist and patriarchal but, to these privileged men, any move towards gender equality feels like oppression.

Men's Rights Activism began in the 1970s and focused its misogynist message in direct opposition to the second wave feminist movement. Women refusing to acquiesce to the *nice guy*'s whims often face intense repercussions, from vulgar name-calling to death threats. And last of all are the "incels," recently brought into the mainstream spotlight, who see their perceived lack of access to women's bodies as a form of oppression. While these groups are not monolithic, their common theme is extreme misogyny. What propelled this school of thought?

Men's Rights Activists

Rather than addressing the real issues affecting men today, like mental health care, suicide prevention, and the under-reporting of abuse to men, MRAs focus on violently controlling women. MRAs claim men are losing their place in society and that American culture has demonized straight, cisgender white men to the point that they believe they are the last remaining demographic acceptable to make fun of. These "activists" accuse mainstream media of brainwashing society with feminist propaganda.

Feminism in 2018 is a far cry from true egalitarianism. Women's issues do not invalidate men to any degree, and the MRA mission is absurd to the point of caricature. Men's Rights activism began in the 1970s with the Men's Liberation movement in reaction to the women's movement. The mouthpiece of this movement is prominent Men's Rights Activist Warren Farrell, who claims that men suffer from masculinity more than they benefit from it. Some of these MRAs took Farrell's message further, aligning themselves with trans-exclusionary radical feminists and the anti-pornography movement. Some MRAs take a different direction and tone, instead claiming that men do *not* have privilege and power. (What planet do they come from?)

The MRAs' message changed from diluted egalitarianism in the 1970s into full-blown misogyny and anti-women rhetoric throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Today, the MRA movement aligns itself with white supremacist groups including the Alt-Right Proud Boys, since they self-identify as "Western Chauvinist." The male supremacist impetus is fear and anger over their perceived loss of footing, of what they think is the now-lowered status of cis white males in our capitalist patriarchal society. They accuse society of empowering women with social capital, but not men.

Groups aligned with the Men's Rights movement have been criticized and labeled hateful, misogynistic, and unimportant. Southern Poverty Law Center has officially labeled several MRA organizations as hate groups for a variety of offenses. A Voice for Men issued a statement declaring the month of October as "Bash-A-Violent-Bitch Month," and MRA website Return of Kings advocates for men to rape women who misbehave. These groups have more power than ever in the Trump era, blaming women and ethnic and racial minorities for the shortcomings of white cis men. MRAs rallied with the Alt-Right in Charlottesville, Virginia in the summer of 2017. An alliance culminating in a domestic terror attack under the guise of civil protest.

The Men's Rights movement has since its inception been misogyny first, men's issues second. In American society, white women earn only 78 cents for every dollar of white men's wages, and women of color earn far less. Our society is patriarchal in structure, with men policing women's bodies. In short, the Men's Rights movement is a joke.

Nice Guys

A quick search for Tumblr accounts dedicated to "Nice Guys" will yield a multitude of screenshots of disgruntled men claiming to be nice guys. Fucknahokcupid-blog.tumblr.com, @byefelipe and the like are full of the rants of these so-called Nice Guys, who blow up if mere minutes pass without the women responding to their DMs. Some of these private messages are violent, and some are just downright hilarious.

I've had my fair share of online harassment. I've been called a, "slut," and an "AIDS-ridden skank." Nice Guys have circulated screenshots of my private camera work to people I know in real life. Friend and confidant Andy Moon, a Black trans man, broke it down like this:

> "I had one friend on the internet for ten years, one day he messaged me and was like 'Why are women trash? Why are they garbage all the time, I wanna curl up into a ball and cry.' You know damn well women aren't garbage. He's like, 'I choose to believe otherwise, for two straight years of women fucking with my emotions, I will sit in my bitterness for a hot minute because nobody else is gonna. Women cozy up with me until something better comes along and bounce and pretend I don't exist.' I'm like, 'Sam, this is sounding very *nice guy*. I don't think women as a whole are the issue, these are individuals.' Then he said, 'a generalization is not an empirical statement,' which is, like, *so* what nice guys, incels, and MRAs say all the goddamn time, because they grew up on places like 4chan, /b, looking up shit on Wikipedia, which is like loosely old white man logic. What they're saying is shitty. The same guy came back in my messages slowly apologizing, blaming it on depression. My situation with this person beforehand was I met him on an anime role-playing IRC. All these older men asking me for nudes, when I turn eighteen, that's when this guy hit me up for nudes, OK well, that's already suspicious. In general, everytime this happens I feel naïve. We're conditioned to be receptive to a cis man being polite to me in anyway. Nine times out of ten, it becomes a situation."

Incels

"People can't understand what it is like to be an incel because our situation is so foreign and strange to most people," says Reddit user u/destiny-draw. The word "incel" is a portmanteau of the words involuntary and celibate. Incels are typically young white men, gathering in communities like incels.me, sluthate.com, and Reddit. The incel is heterosexual and cannot find a romantic partner despite wanting one. Most incels view themselves as a "Supreme Gentleman," yet lack motivation for self improvement. Their self-esteem and value as human beings is solely based on attention they receive from women, who they nonetheless seem to hate.

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Incels view attention from women as a valuable commodity, yet slut shame sexually active women. In complete disregard of their male privilege, incels believe they were dealt a shitty hand in life. Incels adhere to the "80/20 rule," where it is said that eighty percent of women will only be with the "top twenty percent" of men. The alpha males, "Chads," eat first, then the beta males, "incels," gets the crumbs. In the incel's eyes, all women are vain "Stacys"—women do not want nice guys like them, therefore there is no point in self-improvement, a complete admission of failure.

In November 2017, media reported that Reddit had banned a community dedicated to incels that had around 40,000 members. But that could not silence the vain, self-important, self-pitying, sniveling incels from having their way. Incels created and registered an independent offshore site, incels.me. The blatant incel subreddit r/Braincels is still active, and without much digging, anyone can try to stomach their outright ridiculous claims that short men are discriminated against at the same rate as people of color. This comment in particular jumped out at me: "We need an old fashioned, boots on the ground, watch your enemy die in front of you as you stab / shoot them war." What is the genesis of incels?

A woman named Alana accidentally started the incel movement. From a 2016 article in *Elle*: "I was trying to create a movement that was open to anybody for everybody," says Alana, a management consultant and artist based out of Toronto Canada. In 1997, she was 24, bisexual, had recently ended a six-month relationship, and was reflecting upon why her relationship failed. Alana blamed her appearance: she was short and had eczema. But then, Alana had an epiphany: involuntary celibate. Alana built a simple text-based website, "Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project." Her project was intended to be a safe space inclusive for all genders, but it was soon was overtaken by men's repetitive complaining. As that was happening, she became less interested in her website. She began researching queer theory, gained confidence, began to date again, and even explored polyamory. Alana turned the site over to incels, never looking back, soon her site was long gone. Until she read a *Mother Jones* article reporting on Elliot Rodgers and his identification as an incel. "Like a scientist who invented something that ended up being a weapon of war, I can't uninvent this word, nor restrict it to the nicer people who need it," Alana states.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold of the Columbine massacre are held in regard as "OG incels" by some incel forums. With detailed meticulous plans to wipe their school off the map, both young men were hell-bent on seeking out revenge upon those who made their short lives unmanageable: the jocks who got the girls and the girls who made fun of them.

Fingers point towards what happened on May 23, 2014 in Isla Vista, California as the catalyst for the incel movement. Like the Columbine shooters, Elliot Rodger, 22, meticulously plotted his revenge against the "Chads" and "Stacys." He spent thousands of dollars on weapons over the span of a year to carry out his massacre. Rodger began by killing his roommates and one of their friends in a shared apartment in Isla Vista, then driving to a Starbucks. After he finished his coffee, Rodger began what he described in his self-made video detailing his plot, "War on Women," along with an essay posted online. In a 141-page essay titled "My Twisted World," Rodger described himself as a "Supreme Gentleman," detailing his upbringing with his parents' divorce, his frustration and utter disgust with people having sex, and his frustration with his attempts to lose his virginity. Mere hours after his massacre, a mock film YouTube trailer titled *The Supreme Gentleman* circulated, and bootleg merch with his face began to distribute on Redbubble. Rodgers was canonized virtually overnight.

Here's a post from 4chan demonstrating incel's hero worship of Elliot Rodger:

> *"the Patron Saint of r9k, Rest in Peace Elliot Rodger," it began. "Your Day of Retribution was more than a service to society; it was a gift to men like us men who, despite the supposed equality of America, were left to suffer as virgins. The only painful aspect of this otherwise joyous occasion is the knowledge that you'll never know the extent of the psychological damage you caused. ... maybe we can join each other in afterlife and then we'll have an eternity to spend together discussing the putrid nature of the sluts we so despise."*

Incel Alek Minassian, 25, killed ten and wounded fourteen in a van attack in Toronto on April 23, 2018. Instead of leaving behind a lofty grandiose manifesto, he posted this Facebook status: "The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!"

His message was concise: this terrorist attack was a tribute to Elliot Rodger. Minassian was charged with 10 counts of first-degree murder and 13 counts of attempted murder. Unlike Rodger, Minassian killed indiscriminately; yet, as of this writing, the Canadian government does not acknowledge this as a terrorist act.

According to the New York Times, Alek Minassian was a recent college graduate in computer science. His friends describe him as a smart, articulate, computer programmer who served briefly in the military. Yet friends also portray a troubled young man who holds deep resentments towards women and appeared determined with his death wish.

Mainstream media in the past labeled Tamir Rice (who was twelve) Mike Brown, Oscar Grant and Eric Garner as crazed men, thugs—these black men and Tamir were innocently slayed. The same media outlets were sympathetic towards spree killers Dylan Klebold, Eric Harris, James Holmes, Dylann Roof, Devin Patrick Kelley, Nikolas Cruz, Adam Lanza, Alek Minassian, and Elliot Rodger, painting a visual of these men riddled with mental illness. These are not isolated incidences; toxic masculinity leads to terrorism. Men's Rights Activism and red pill / black pill incel culture compels young white men to become mass murderers. My solution and extrapolating conclusion: fling all of these delusional men into the goddamn sun.

—Nessa Moreno

Recently, I've reached a strange point in my recording history. For much of my teenage years, recordings that I played on just didn't sound like the music I was listening to. My fingers couldn't play what I wanted them to, my songwriting was sub-par, and no one I was playing in bands with had any idea how to correctly use a four-track. As I grew older, I began to hone those skills—playing, writing, and recording. Somewhere in my early twenties, music I was making started sounding like music that I wanted to be listening to. But a couple years ago, that began to change again. For some reason, the music I was making no longer brought me joy when I listened to it.

There are a lot of reasons to write songs, but one of my primary motivations has always existed in the moment when I say to myself, "wouldn't it be great if there was a song that sounded like..." and then I set about to make it so that I can listen to what I wanted to hear. So it was really upsetting that I was once again unable to realize those ideas. It took me a while to realize why. It was largely in the production value of recordings. I was finally making recordings whose fidelity was exceeding that of most of the records I liked.

How many times have you heard someone say, "Yeah, that record's pretty good, but have

you heard the demo?" I'm guilty of uttering it myself, too, and often. The idea straddles eras and crosses oceans. Punks love demos. Early basement recordings are viewed with an appreciation that almost dips into the realm of reverence. As far as I can tell, the phenomenon of preferring demos to studio records is relatively unique to punk.

There are probably countless reasons why we, as a group, tend to prefer demos. Some are probably completely surface level. One might be a completist and want to hear a band's entire catalogue, or have a compulsion to always go chronologically and start from a band's humble beginnings. Other reasons are completely selfish. Being familiar with relatively unknown demos can function as a shibboleth—proof that you are one of the truly initiated. Listening to and talking about the demo versions of Faith's songs from the Faith / Void split might make someone feel dedicated and cool. But I'd like to think that most people aren't that shallow.

Then there are reasons that mirror the ethos of punk. Since the democratization of music is important to us, a band sounds like they recorded on an old secondhand four-track plays into that ideal. Demos usually sound like they could have been created by anyone with minimal equipment, experience, and skill. Better sound quality flies in the face of that. High fidelity is associated with professionalism, age, experience, contrived artifice, and most damningly, a bigger budget. Furthermore, mistakes and imperfections are often perceived as the result of youthful exuberance, vulnerability, or immediacy.

But it's not just the perception of ideals that draws me to a more low-fidelity sound. Demos more closely mirror the sound of a live band. We all grew up going to as many shows as we could, and we grew used to a simple, unadorned live sound. We grew used to the sound of vocals coming through a half-broken PA, clipping the whole time. We grew used to the tinny sound of guitar amps bouncing off of cement walls. And, if you're like me and came of age in the Napster era, you grew up listening to 96 kbps rips of overly-hot late '90s remasters played through tiny computer speakers or a secondhand boom box. Even records with enormously high production value begin to sound lo-fi as you dip below 100 kbps, especially in that era when dynamics were being sacrificed in order to win the loudness war. If you're a little older, then you probably have a giant stack of cassette tapes full of songs that you either pulled off the radio or copied off another cassette. If virtually all the music we listened to as kids sounded like a demo, then maybe that's the sound that we were destined to grow to love.

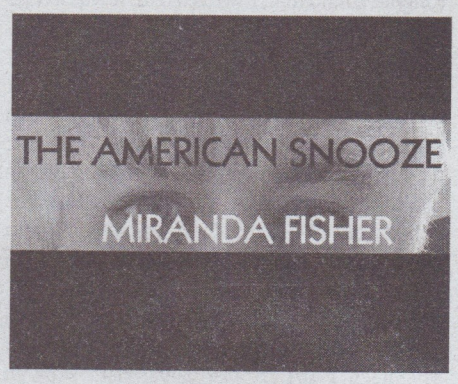
But then there are also a few reasons that might be somewhat destructive. With current bands, I often become intimately familiar with their demo or first record before the next record has a chance to be released. If those next recordings stray from the first ones in a direction that I don't like, I can't help feeling almost betrayed. Sometimes, I'll be really excited to hear an instrumental band's new record, only to hear it peppered with lyrics. "Ugh, you went vocal on me," I'll decry, before ripping the needle off and putting the record at the back of a pile, never to be listened to again.

But, for the most part, I don't want to stifle creativity. Musicians want to experiment. They want to try out new skills and sounds. Fans don't always follow them, but that's no reason not to try to explore the unconventional. Not too long before the punk era, it was commonplace for bands to make huge leaps in style, musicianship, production, or even genre between records. There's a 45 in my collection that contains the song "The Birdman of Alkatrash." It was originally intended to be the A-side of STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK's first single. The song is fun, but very unimpressive. It would fit almost perfectly on any Back from the Grave compilation, but wouldn't be a standout track on them. In short, it's a typical garage rock song with really dumb lyrics and, except for a pair of delightful keyboard solos, almost sub-competent musicianship. That came out in 1967. But the time their second full length record came out (in 1968, no less), the band had gone from barely being able to play their instruments to writing bat-shit crazy songs with six-part vocal harmony, dueling xylophones, frequent changes in time signature, and playing that would put any punk to shame. They made these huge changes in the span of two LPs and one year.

I have huge admiration for the leap that STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK made in such a short time frame. In fact, I wish I was willing to take such risks. I wish my songwriting would develop into something less simple. Maybe it's GEZA X that I'm aspiring to—the STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK of West Coast punk (and not just for his use of dueling xylophones). After all, what do I wish existed more than a second MOMMYMEN record? GEZA is innovative and experimental while simultaneously having a complete disregard for industry standard production. When master tapes had too much warble, GEZA cut them into a million pieces and reassembled them. When Pat Smear showed up to the studio without an amp, GEZA just ran the guitar through as many pedals as he could find and then straight into the board. Who cares what it sounds like as long as it's there and it's weird?

So, while I desperately want my musicianship and songwriting to grow, I have no interest in the fidelity of my recordings to advance past the bare minimum. Sure, I'd like to be able to make out what is happening in each part, and maybe I might want to use an eight-track rather than a four-track so I have some extra space for those dueling xylophones, but I don't need it to sound crisp. I want to hear blown-out vocals that have the fuzz and warble of a demo. The next time I sit down to record, I need to accept the songs for what they are and not belabor the recording process too much. I just don't want it to sound that crisp.

—Nicky Reynolds



I've been totally swamped with work lately (again), so I've mostly been listening to shit I know really well, shit I don't have to think critically about, shit that's so ingrained into my mind that it makes the perfect background music. (I think this is a perfectly logical reaction to stress, by the way. When I was a teen, I mentioned to a friend that I'd been kind of taking a break from new music for a few weeks. He looked at me, aghast, and said "I *always* want to hear new music." But guess what, that guy doesn't listen to new music at all anymore as far as I can tell, and here I am coordinating *MRR*, so I win, motherfucker! I mean, unless your definition of "winning" includes, like, financial security or free time or things like that.)

Anyway, for me that means that I've been listening to a ton of old Milwaukee punk for the past week or two. Like probably half of this magazine's readership, I got into punk via the RAMONES—for me, it was hearing "I Wanna Be Sedated" in the background of the Tom Arnold movie *Carpool* at a slumber party in sixth grade. Wish it was something cooler, but that's the truth! Anyway, after that I wanted more, so, as a true nerd, I started to read everything I could find about punk. And because most of that was in, like, *Spin* magazine or something, my idea of punk for those first few years was totally based around the big bands. Punk, I was certain, was something that happened in the '70s, in cities like New York and London. Every punk band

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was on Sire or EMI or CBS. I even convinced myself that I liked the CLASH for a while!

The big thing that changed my conception of what punk was or could be—even more than discovering local shows a few years later—was reading about *History in 3 Chords*, a 2xCD compilation of Milwaukee punk bands that existed between 1973 and 1982 that came out when I was in eighth grade. When I got my hands on it, I fell in love immediately. These people didn't look like rock stars; they looked like regular Wisconsin men and women who had given themselves bad haircuts and decided to start a band. The music on the comp matched the visuals, too—a rougher sound than I was used to, it was a little scary to me but instantly intriguing. This was moment I began to truly understand the idea of "do it yourself." These people wanted to play music, so they started playing music. That was something even I could do. And the fact that they never got famous had no bearing on the quality of their music. True, Milwaukee was still the big city to me, but I was beginning to believe that something like this could happen even in Stevens Point, WI.

History in 3 Chords is a collection I've regularly come back to over the last seventeen years. It just never gets stale to me. The recordings are presented in roughly chronological order, beginning in the mid-1970s with DEATH (no, not that DEATH...or *that* DEATH...this was a group of Milwaukee degenerates that briefly featured a young JAMES CHANCE) and ending in the early '80s with, duh, DIE KREUZEN. There are certain bands (especially the middle of the second disc, with AMADOTS, DARK FACADE, etc.) that have never quite clicked for me, but I've found myself appreciating more and more of the tracks as I get older. The women of YOUNG STUFF snottily informing a lover that they're more than a "Sex Doll," for example, got a whole lot more understandable (and way less scary) to me as an adult than it was as a junior high schooler. But the stars of the whole comp to me remain the same as the first time I listened: the motherfucking HASKELS.

If you're into KBD shit or have even a passing interest in classic Midwest punk, then you of course know the HASKELS' biggest non-hit, "Taking the City By Storm." If you are more of a nerd, then you've heard the rest of their only record as well; two of the songs—"Daddy's Girl" and "Baby Let's French"—are, in my estimation, just as good as "City," though they lack some of that song's venom. But there are a few tracks on the *History* comp that were never released on vinyl: "Liberace is Coming" and slower takes of "Taking the City by Storm" and "Baby Let's French." These recordings feature the earlier lineup of the band, while the 7" was recorded by a later lineup that featured no original members except the main man himself, Presley Haskel, a.k.a. Jerome Brish.

If you read absolutely anything about the early Milwaukee punk scene, it becomes apparent that the HASKELS were at its epicenter, especially the initial lineup of Brish, brothers Richard and Gerard Lavalliere, and Guy Hoffman. But that fact was reinforced in my brain even more last year when I read the excellent *Brick Through the Window: an Oral History of Punk Rock, New Wave and Noise in Milwaukee, 1964–1984.* (The first HASKELS lineup is featured on the cover, of course—who else could it have been?) The care and attention to detail that went into this book is astounding, and it easily captures just what it is that made the early Milwaukee scene so thrilling. At nearly 700 pages, it's exhaustive but never exhausting; I ripped through it in just a few days. It's as funny and exciting as the any of best punk books, and it covers a scene that had previously been relatively undocumented There are so many bands covered that it would be pretty much impossible to be a fan of all of them—again, I just cannot force myself to care about the AMADOTS, who have a few dozen pages dedicated solely to them—but there's plenty of good shit in here, and a lot of it seems to center around the HASKELS and especially Jerome Brish.

According to pretty much everyone in the book, Brish was not exceptionally talented, but he was exceptionally invested in music—which is, of course, the best kind of punk to be. Brish is credited with inspiring (or even explicitly forcing) seemingly 80% of the players in the early Milwaukee scene to start bands. His ex-wife, Su Zette of YOUNG STUFF, recounts being pressured by a former partner to give up the guitar, then having the polar opposite experience when she began dating Brish. There are countless tales of teens wandering into the record shop where Brish worked and being enthusiastically recruited into the realm of punk. And while being a white guy who played with Black musicians certainly shouldn't win him any awards, I do think it's pretty damn cool that the HASKELS lineup that recorded the "Takin' the City by Storm" EP was 2/3 Black; Milwaukee remains the most segregated city in America today, and in the late '70s / early '80s there wasn't exactly a lot of integration in the punk scene there. (Shout out to Bobby "Haskel" Mitchell and Vodie "Haskel" Rhinehart, two excellent musicians whose work as a rhythm section undeniably contributed much of what makes that record so cherished to this day.)

The late '70s Milwaukee punk scene was also earnestly leftist in the kind of way that can only arise in a union town with three socialist mayors in its history. When local movers and shakers began to organize, the main punk venue in town, Zak's—which Presley Haskel is partially credited with turning into a punk hangout—promptly declared an informal ban on bands that belonged to a union...and, according to an *Express* article at the time, on the HASKELS in particular. So Presley Haskel suggested forming a local musicians' guild, then began to exert his power over the local scene to shift shows to another bar, the more musician-friendly (and Black-owned!) Starship. *He literally organized collective action to better his local punk scene in the year 1980.*

That fact, along with so many others, makes Jerome Brish / Presley Haskel kind of my punk hero. I mean, this dirt-poor, fatherless, untalented guy from Wisconsin basically started a whole scene around him through sheer passion and force of will, all the while using his privilege as a straight white guy to raise the voices of women and POC, inspire young people to get involved with punk, and fight for workers' rights. (The HASKELS' slogan was "Workers' rock'n'roll," for chrissakes!) But, as *Brick Through the Window* makes clear, he was also a total asshole—a self-serving, egotistical alcoholic whose primary motivation in just about everything he did was self-promotion. Former HASKEL Richard Lavalliere, who left the band and started the OIL TASTERS largely because he didn't wanna work with ol' Pres anymore:

> *Jerome set off on a raging, energetic and endless jag to create as many enemies as possible. His opinion was: he wasn't being a dick; he was just exposing those with anti-Jerome tendencies. He insisted that I support him in this, unequivocally and without question.*

And you know what? I even kinda like that about him. I like that the guy was probably someone I wouldn't wanna know in real life. Because we shouldn't have heroes! We should all strive to be our own heroes, whatever that means for us. Anyway, Jerome Brish would basically be my dream interview subject, but he was tragically beaten to death in 1991 as he walked his dog on Milwaukee's East side. His influence, though, clearly lives on.

This is all to say that I've been listening to the HASKELS and other early Milwaukee punk a lot lately, and somebody should put out *History in 3 Chords* on vinyl 'cause it fuckin' smokes.

***

History in 3 Chords is out of print, but you can download it for free at mkepunk.com. You can purchase *Brick Through the Window* at brickthroughthewindow.com

***

Rejected column topics:

- San Francisco Is Nice But It's Fuckin' Cold in the Summer: An Inside Report
- Why Bob 1 Is the Best DEVO (It's

Because He's So Good at Guitar!)

- Blahblah I don't know, something about work, all I do is work anymore

***

Maybe the best thing about being a content coordinator for *MRR* is that I can write a couple thousand words about the HASKELS and nobody can tell me to shut up because they're sick of hearing about the HASKELS, as usually happens. When this column develops its deserved rabid cult following and fans start sending me gifts, I want a custom-made HASKELS t-shirt that says "Workers' Rock and Roll" on it. Until that day, you can just email me at miranda@maximumrocknroll.com. Especially please email me if you have a line on any released HASKELS recordings—beyond the ones on *History in Three Chords*, I've heard "Dead Man's Shoes," "Walk to the Beach," and "Haskel Hotel," but there have gotta be more out there, right?!

women and butches

Despite the popularity of the chain punk / egg punk spectrum (and my engagement with the meme), I spent little time this month thinking about punk or hardcore. That's not for a lack of engagement—I went to multiple shows, including Aklasan Fest, and I spent a lot of time playing music as well. But my mind has been focused on white supremacy this month—my complicitness with it and steps to be taken to fight it.

I grew up in a deeply white supremacist family. My father's side of the family had been living in north Florida for over a hundred years, perhaps long enough for my ancestors to have directly experienced the Civil War. Whether or not they fought is unclear, but the pride they felt was tangible and evident. I grew up surrounded by Confederate flags, with at least two of my relatives having them tattooed on their bodies. We would go to Civil War battle reenactments, cheering for the Confederacy to somehow win the battle in spite of history. If that doesn't paint a clear enough picture of how entrenched white supremacy is in my family, there were several times where relatives said "n*****" around me when I was a mere child. It shouldn't be surprising, given that I had heard multiple times about how my grandfather's participation in the Ku Klux Klan in the '20s was different than the Klan now because "they were more of a neighborhood watch organization."

I am not excepted from white supremacy's influence. As a child I essentially was not allowed to interact with non-Christians and people outside of the family. Because of that, I was sheltered from any sort of conversation about race from people outside of my family. I first heard a relative say "n*****" when I was about seven years old, and without understanding the hate in that word, I soon called a Black girl that slur. I was immediately suspended from school, and when I got home, my mother (who had always grimaced at the slur) explained to me its hatred. I felt sick to my stomach. I wanted so badly to apologize to her, to tell her I didn't know what it meant, but I never saw her again—her parents transferred her to another school immediately.

This incident is what led to my radicalization later in life. And while I still perpetuate white supremacy (just like all white people), this experience is what lead me to analyze the ways my actions and the actions of other people perpetuate white supremacy.

As I grew up, I began to understand white supremacy more and more, growing even more disgusted at myself and my family with each new revelation about the ways that white supremacy rears its ugly head. And damn if it didn't appear in so many situations. My parents kept me away from the relatives who used slurs, but the ways in which their supremacy had infiltrated their psyche were apparent. For instance: when my mother would drive through an area with Black or brown pedestrians, she would lock her windows and tense up. The first time that happened, I asked why. She prattled off some nonsense about violence, about protecting me. When that would happen I would ask something like "Why are you more afraid of this Black person instead of the white pedestrian? Is it the color of his skin?" I insisted on asking these questions every time this occurred—she became flustered each time, never having a good answer. But it must have caused some thought because she stopped that practice after at least a year of being called out. I won't punish you with each and every instance of racism that I called them out for, but I will note that calling them out worked effectively. White supremacy still influences them (as it does all white people, myself included) but their behavior *has* changed over time.

When it comes to the fight against white supremacy and showing support for Black and brown people, the little things are important. Too often white people only show up for people of color when there is a tragedy, and even then there frequently is a lack of understanding about all of the ways that white supremacy emerges. If you are white, ask yourself if you have called out racist family members, coworkers, friends, and acquantances. This is emotional work that must be done, and while it may be stressful, it is important work for white people to do. If you are white, give money and resources to people of color who are in need. Ask your white friends if they support reparations, and explain to them how Black people frequently do not have inter-generational wealth like white people often do. There are many more ways to fight white supremacy depending on individual situations—if you are white, regularly ask yourself which of your behaviors contribute to white supremacy. Above all, if you are white, listen to Black and brown people.

The murder of Nia Wilson (rest in power) and the violence committed by ICE and the police are not isolated incidents, but rather the progression that white supremacy takes. The end goal of white supremacy at its extreme is the death of people of color. Every white person, myself included, contributes to this culture of white supremacy, and it is the duty of white people, myself included, to do what we can to fight it when and where we can. Merely showing up for large rallies is not enough work.

—joan@maximumrocknroll.com

Obviously, when Joan and Miranda told me that as a coordinator I could have my own column, the fantasy that came to mind was of me as Carrie Bradshaw, writing about me and my friends' newest sexual revelations and hottest gossip. But I couldn't possibly! No, this is *Maximum Rocknroll*! I'm supposed to write about punk music or whatever, right?

Well, shit, I've kinda fallen out of the loop in terms of what's new in punk right now. It was literally months ago that I was told to write a column, and I've been trying to think of music-related topics to write about since, but have consistently given up. There was once a time when I felt really clued in to the

COLUMNS

newest bands, newest records, who's on tour, and national punk gossip (well, actually I'm still pretty on top of gossip). It was easy to be in the know when I still lived in Boston, was playing in four to six bands, booked lots of shows, and toured constantly. Now I'm over here trying to figure out why I've only heard of half the bands on the chain / egg punk spectrum, like where have I been??

I thought for sure I wasn't punk enough to get hired at *Maximum*...literally the last question of my hour-long phone interview in April was, "There's only one answer to this question: what's the best BLACK FLAG song?" I couldn't think of a single one, and also fuck BLACK FLAG! I haven't intentionally listened to them since I was thirteen, when I intentionally stopped listening to them because they're boring. I think I answered with something like, "You can not hire me for this, but I don't give a shit about BLACK FLAG." Honestly, I spent a week wondering if that answer would disqualify me from getting to work at *MRR*, since I knew that the (mysterious at the time) Board of Directors at *Maximum* were listening to and analyzing my recorded phone interview. I was paranoid that the question was a trick. Was it there to expose me as someone who doesn't care about punk tradition and legacy? Would they not want to hire someone who hasn't been a nerd for the punk ancients?

All is well, though. I was hired and no one's ever confronted me about my answer to the BLACK FLAG question. Also, I quickly realized that the BLACK FLAG question was just a part of a collectively-written interview format for all prospective Distribution Coordinators that my interviewers were just working off of. If anyone's ever interviewed to be a part of a collective or cooperative, you might be able to sympathize with me about how awkward interviews can be. Hell, I've given my fair share of awkward interviews, both when I lived in a cooperative house in Boston and was an owner at New Moon Cooperative Cafe in Olympia. So I understand that when collective institutions have been around for a while, processes and templates tend to be in use for long past their expiration date, and it takes a lot of collective effort and patience to make changes. I'm relieved to be coming into my work at *MRR* with the collective experience I have...and I feel for anyone who's tried to insert themselves into a long-standing group dynamic for the first time. I can imagine how intimidating and frustrating that must be to do at *MRR*.

But I'm also super relieved that to be working on this magazine with Miranda and Joan, the current content coordinators. They are genuine, humble, and honest, and I love them both. We're all relatively new to this project, so none of us have much seniority and I feel a real sense of camaraderie between the three of us trying to figure out the future of this magazine. We talk constantly about *does punk suck??* And *is punk dead??* And *how can we make this magazine relevant again??* It's no secret that *Maximum Rocknroll* has a long-standing reputation of being exclusionary, elitist, and even boring. I'm not trying to blame anyone in particular for this reputation, because it's a collective issue. I'm part of it, too, even if I've only been here for like two months. But I feel very happy [worldwide] that we're talking about how to continuously make tangible changes and where to go from here.

Even earlier today, the three of us and one of our Young Shitworkers (I'm avoiding naming them) were talking about how we have such few young punks in the Bay Area volunteering at *MRR*. Why? The Young Shitworker wondered if it was because the magazine was too insular. They said their fellow young punk friends care about punk, but they also care about many other genres / hobbies. In an expensive city where everyone has little free time and energy to volunteer, it feels hard for them to get their friends to dedicate time to a project that was so limited to *MRR*'s definition of punk. And what is punk? Has the magazine's definition of punk stayed stationary since the 1990s while the rest of the world's definition has evolved to mean something more? Have punks—especially punks of color—become disenfranchised with *MRR*'s representation of what punk is? And how can we, as people directly responsible for what goes into the magazine, with its constant deadlines, reassess the old guards that perpetuate the hype machine of homogenous punk?

These are questions that have been floating around *MRR* for a while, and I want us to be transparent about it. The group of people who work on this magazine are majority white, and there is a good amount of access to career and family stability that allows for time to dedicate to this project. It's not like that across the board, of course, but the demographic of this group is notable. I'm still learning about the history of who's worked here, what they did, why people left, etc. But there must be foundational structures in place that have allowed for this group to be mostly made of comfortably-classed white people running a magazine that features mostly white bands. While Joan, Miranda, and I weren't a part of founding this magazine, we benefit from the structure in place (we were hired into this group and have free rent in an extremely expensive formerly-Black neighborhood of the most expensive city in the U.S.). We could easily decide to keep running the magazine as we were trained (as we arguably have been), with decades of explanations like, "I don't know why this why we do it, but this is how it's always been done," but then how would anything change? How can we expect new engagement and contributions if we keep this project running as is if it were an immobile organization that we have little control over? Personally, I'm glad that it seems like the general consensus between us new coordinators is to not blindly adhere to tradition solely for the sake of *Maximum* legacy. I feel lucky and grateful that we're all excited to be tackling these questions together, and working toward finding material ways to make *MRR* a media that punks are excited to contribute to again.

Yesterday, I found an old, crumpled-up fortune cookie paper that said, "Life is like playing the violin in public and learning the instrument as one goes on." Fucking true, but I'd like to add my own thought to that sentiment: I don't think anyone will able to play the violin perfectly. You know what I mean? We're all learning all the time, and we will never be perfect. I want *Maximum*'s learning and changing to be public, because so much of what we do is public. We're contributor-based: we're not a monolith, and we're never just one voice. It's even super easy to submit content to the magazine, which I didn't realize until I got here. (How can we make the magazine more accessible to contributors? Another question to ponder...) But yeah, anyway, we're all over here trying to play the violin while learning to play the violin or whatever, and it's a collective effort. If you have any shareable experience or suggestions, please chime in. Write me at vicky@maximumrocknroll.com OK? This is an unending conversation and there are so many more things I want to say, but I'm reaching my word count and time limit (Dan Goetz is here to do the columns layout right now, oops). There is lots and lots to write about in regards to how we are unlearning all types of bullshit, but I will leave more until next month. Again, if you want to talk to me (about literally anything, and also specifically about what I've written about in this column), please email me.

I've somehow managed to write a column and hardly talk about music at all. Literally the only band I mentioned is BLACK FLAG (fuck), and I somehow didn't write about my sex life or gossip (how). But seriously: do you think we should have a Page 6 in Maximum? The tabloids of punk? Obviously it would be terrible, but—don't lie—wouldn't you read it?? It can be anonymous xoxo Gossip Girl style? Please send all "anonymous" tabloid articles to my email as well. ;)

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RIP STEVE SOTO

Kid From the Black Hole No More

Steve Soto, who died June 27th in his sleep, was literally the heart and godfather of Southern California hook-laden punk whose talents filled the likes of the Adolescents, Agent Orange, Manic Hispanic, 22 Jacks, Legal Weapon, and more. He brimmed with unbelievable talent and a ceaseless work ethic. He was also the glue that held together generations of outsider music. The Adolescents' gigs were pure mania. I was lucky to interview him for publications like *Left of the Dial* and the *Houston Press*, plus the first flyer I ever made as a restless teen was for an Adolescents gig in rust belt city Rockford, IL.

By the early 1980s, Soto had made his seminal mark. "Pretty sure I never met Steve before we started the blue album [the band's self-titled album] at Perspective Sound in Sun Valley, CA, in 1981. He forgot his bass, or maybe it broke before he left Orange County. Either way, a bass was borrowed at zero hour from a good friend of mine, and the rest is history," remembers Lisa Fancher, owner and operator of Frontier Records, who received a phone call from guitarist Rikk Agnew [Adolescents, DI, etc] relating the terrible news. "The previous Monday, I was texting back and forth with Steve about getting Adolescents records to Germany for their upcoming tour. He apologized for requesting them at the last minute, and I said, 'Steve, doing things at the last minute proves you're a musician.'" She immediately understood the significance of the loss. "He wrote some of the greatest, most important punk songs of all time, indeed some of the best songs of all time. He never had a minute off, always writing, playing, performing, tour managing, or recording. He did all those things up until the day that he died. We lost a musical legend, one that everybody loved as well, and that is one helluva legacy."

Ever-smiling Soto was an agile player whose fingers finessed melodic chords culled from endless Beatles and Buzzcocks records. "When it came to music he was tireless," remembers Jack Grisham of TSOL. Soto sang backup vocals on *Music For Break-Ups* by Grisham's other much-admired band, The Joykiller. "Steve had the heart of a child hidden in that bodily mass. He looked at each note and melody line like something he had found on an adventure and there was nothing that he wanted more than to share it with us." Across from Soto always stood the forever Defiant One: singer Tony Cadena, a public school teacher, respected songwriter, and bard of lost lads may offer up a voice as gruff as sandpaper instead of teenage howls these days, but he still imbues the music with keen intelligence and worldly perspectives.

The violence evoked in Adolescents' songs, such as the trenchant "Wrecking Crew," is two-fold. The first symbolizes youth trying to cope with the everyday boredom and suffocating social order of the suburbs. As such, the tunes are anthems to primitive smash-it-up fun and survival, not an ode to punk-on-punk violence. This is easily underscored during their performances, in which vintage skinheads, skater thrillseekers, Latinx punks galore, skinny MC5-inspired longhairs, agitated mohicans, and ageless rockers all converge in the slam zone, like a rabid flock. If a literary allegory exists for such a scene, it's a hyped-up, feral Peter Pan, not Lord of the Flies.

"The first time I met Steve, I went jumping up on stage at Bogart's in Long Beach when the Adolescents were playing," tells Lisa Fancher, aka Lisafer (45 Grave, DI, Nina Hagen, Snap-Her), "to hassle some cheerleader and push her off stage, then when I bent down and stood up, I smacked my head super-hard on the headstock of his bass. Instead of him being irritated by me wanting to kick one of his other fan's asses...he was saying to me, 'Oh my goodness, are you okay?' And ever since then, no matter where I have seen him—personal, doing music, or otherwise—he was just a genuinely true good soul, and I miss him very much."

The other violence the band writes about is the power of authority—corporations, government, and parents, the triple threat to kids trying to become free-minded adults. This includes the "stupid science world" of anthemic "Amoeba," which they launched with tenacity in the first era of hardcore. They also penned odes to homeless kids formulating their own morals in "Kids of the Black Hole" and outlined endless industrial ills in "Monsanto Hayride." That track from *O.C. Confidential* lyrically denounced pesticides, mercury poisoning, growth hormones, and the dark side of "amber waves of greed." Plus, even their newer tunes pack social observations, politics, and ferocity, as well as humor, including "Escape from Planet Fuck," featured on *Manifest Destiny*, which catalogs modern despair due to greedy economic overlords, as well as ones like "Flat Earth Stomp" and "Nuclear Football" on their brand new potent album *Cropduster*.

The punk world will be a lesser place due to the loss of Soto, whose formidable music and attitude will now hold sway in our memories; in addition, his small, everyday acts of kindness still ring resonate powerfully.

"I met Steve when Four Letter Word joined the Swingin' Utters and 22 Jacks on the Canadian leg of their 1998 tour," recalls Welly, singer for FLW and longtime editor of the zine *Artcore*. "A couple of days into the tour in Calgary, he walked up and introduced himself, and told us that he liked our music because it reminded him of the bands he was into from the early days of punk. He then followed this by saying it was him who'd suggested to BYO Records that they get us over on tour. This was one of the biggest compliments we ever received. I bumped into Mr. Soto a few more times over the years when the Adolescents would pass through on tour, and he'd always remember you and make time to talk. A great talent, great guy and a great loss."

—David Ensminger

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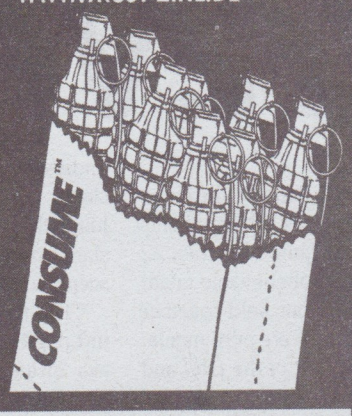

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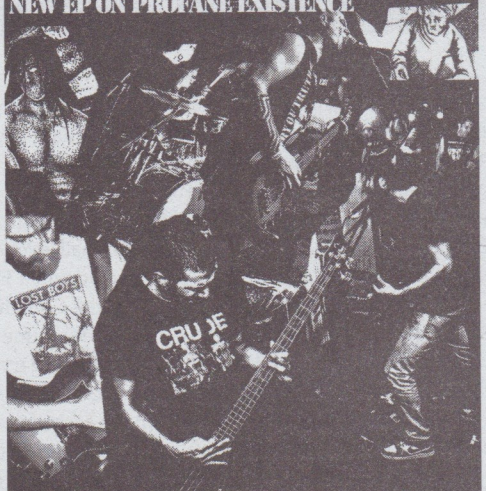

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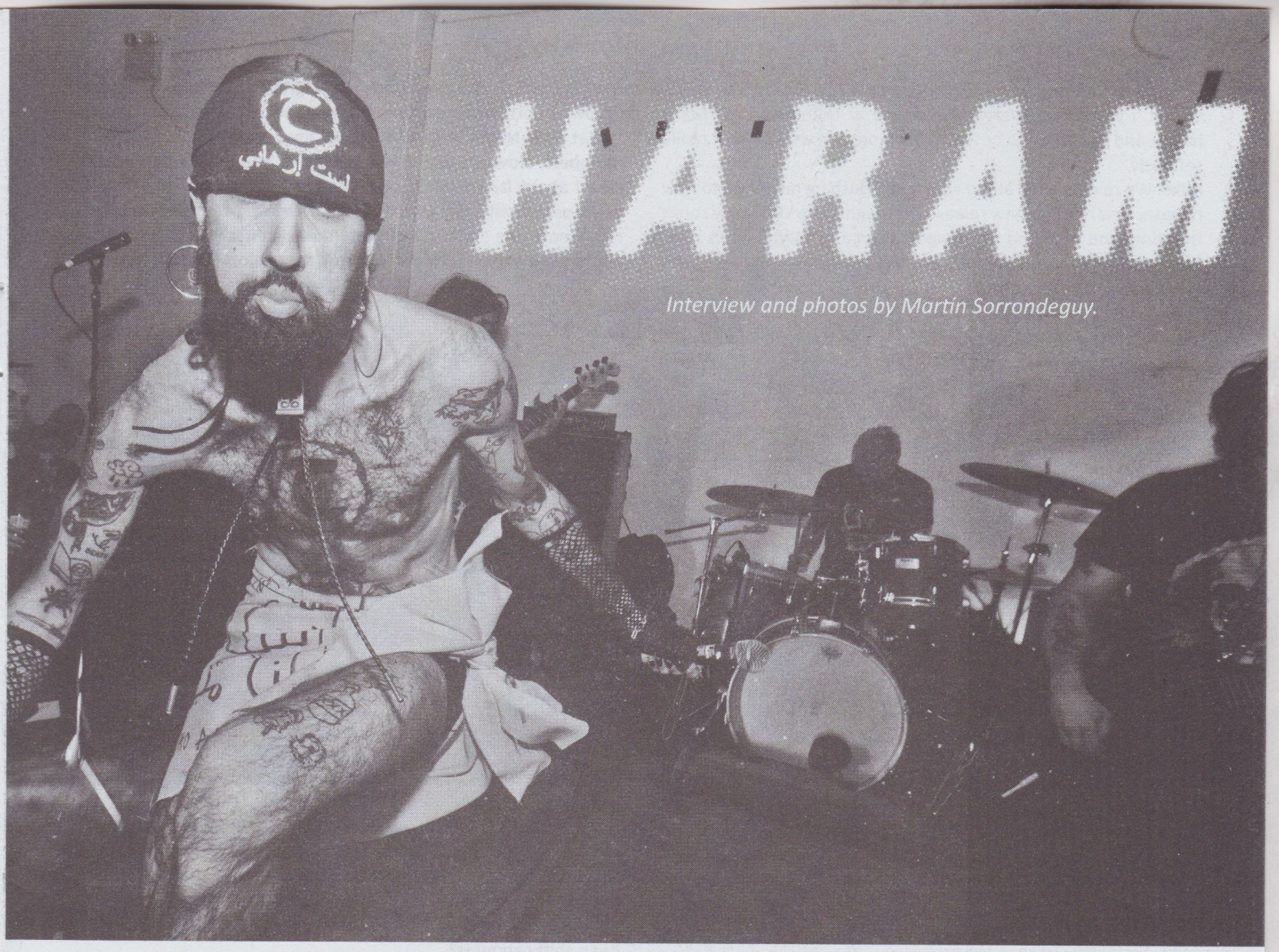


HARAM

Interview and photos by Martin Sorrondeguy.

Nader: My name is Nader Haram, and this is Haram. We are a four-piece band as you can see, and we're from Brooklyn, New York. We're in Chicago right now at Martín's house, and we played a show last night at Chi-Town Futbol. It was a great show. We have some plans coming up, and it's been a hell of a ride so far, trials and tribulations, and joy and tears, and it's been a journey to say the least.

MRR: OK, there may still be some people who might not know who Haram is. How long have you all been playing?
Nader: I think about three years. I said three years before, but I'm not sure.
Mike: Maybe actually playing for a few years, but working for four years?
Martin: I joined in February 2015.
Nader: We've narrowed it down.
Mike: And we had our first show in July 2015.
Mike: We met like a year before that, yeah.
Nader: They met a year, and they were playing music together. Mike hit me up to try vocals. Then the three of us were jamming for about half a year, I'd say.
Mike: We went through three or four bassists, but nobody was good.
Nader: Right, that space in Williamsburg by the water.
Mike: Little tiny space.
Nader: Martin moved to Connecticut, moved down, or you were visiting?
Martin: No, I moved back there.
Nader: You moved back at that point? OK, so you moved back to Yonkers, where I was living at the time. So Martin moved in with me, and then I told him about the band, and he wanted to come try out for bass, and it kind of worked out from there. So yeah, I guess February 2015 because today's the official...
Nader: First show, July.
Mike: July, yeah.
Nader: So, three years, yeah.

MRR: You see, that's wild to me because I feel there's so much that has been talked about Haram that I thought maybe you were actually around longer than that.
Nader: Really?

MRR: Which is incredible, I dunno, I just think maybe things moved so fast.
Nader: I feel like the timeline for a lot of bands seems to be kind

of condensed for us, and we've accomplished a lot in three years. We all, I think, feel overwhelmed, and at the same time really happy, and privileged to be in this position, and we all take it really seriously.

Mike: We're very good about constantly pushing ourselves to new release, new release, new release. No stagnation. We'll play songs that time and time and again we've played so many shows now, it's so easy to just get in a rut, it could be so easy be playing the same set...but "nope, nope, we need to keep writing," it's kind of like "*crash*."

Nader: We just put out our first LP a few months ago. How long has it been?

James: I would say it's been eight months.

Mike: Let's see: October, November.

Nader: About eight months ago we put out the LP, and I felt when we put out the LP we're like, "OK, now we have about five years where we can hang out," according to other bands around us. It seemed like when we put out the LP, we would have a lot of time to chill, and I feel like as a group we really don't feel that way.

Mike: We kind of did want to not think about it for a year or two. Our general neurosis and anxiety that we all seem to suffer from... like "we've gotta have something out soon, soon, soon."

Nader: Partly that, but also that we're a really active band in the studio, in the practice space. We do have a lot of energy to keep the writing fresh and creative and new, and we're always pushing each other and pushing ourselves in a new direction, and I think we're not really afraid. Even on the LP, I remember there were a few tracks where we were like, "man, we don't know how this is going to do." You know, "we don't know how people are going to feel about this," but we felt good about it and it was a new direction for us. It was really down to the wire, that record. So even now we're planning a new record, and I remember when we first started talking about it, in my mind, at least, I was like, "is this too soon to put out a new record?" But I realized that should never be a question you should ask. If you want to put out music there should be nothing holding you back from that. Even if it's been a month, you know, you should just put it out if you feel confident about it.

MRR: I don't know everybody's background, but clearly Nader becomes sort of the center person, right, like people always go "what does Nader have to say?" So my question is to the other members. How is it being in a band like Haram? Do people get weird about it? I think my question is coming from thinking of a US perspective on looking at somebody or something that represents the "other," if that makes sense? So right away people want to go: "Nader! We got a question for you. Nader!"

But it's not just Nader. You've all come to an agreement to do something, and it's this project. So, how has that been? Have there been people that have been really shitty about it? Have people been OK about it? I'll let you guys just talk.

Mike: Like when people have been shitty to us, or when we've been shitty about it?

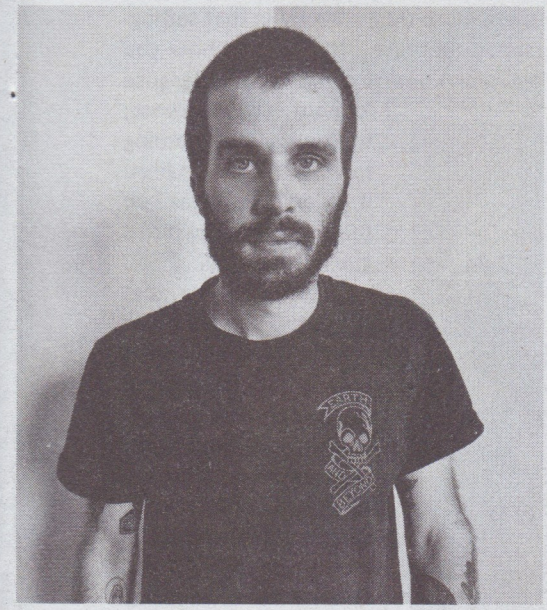
MRR: No! Maybe people being shitty towards you, or just have kinda gone "oh, you have nothing to offer. We want to hear from Nader."

Nader: I want to hear this. I'm very interested.

Mike: I mean, I dunno. We're writing and composing the music, we're not... The whole thing is, we're providing a voice for someone who there is no voice for, especially in this kind of scene, prior to this, like at all. I've got like crazy stories, but like...I'm white. There's no unique thing that I need to say. There's plenty of other underprivileged white people, that's just the people who voted for Trump. There's nothing unique about my story, versus Nader who has not had a voice before, you know? All early New York hardcore stuff, like that. A lot of underprivileged white people. Thirty years later, what am I gonna offer beyond that story?

James: I think when we were writing music, our existence revolved around being people that met in a room to write new songs, and when Nader said he wanted to sing in Arabic, it was his prerogative. It's like, if you wanted to do anything, it's up to him as an artist, as an individual to do that, and it didn't really seem to encroach much on my participation musically or as a band member for him to do whatever it is that he wanted to do politically. Obviously it's important to bring more voices into the mix. I'm very happy to use my musicianship, or my efforts as a

band member, to help facilitate this for the four of us. So if people want to split hairs about who is saying what, and what sort of band, and what the form really is, what's appropriate in terms of who can play in an Arabic language punk band, I think I would say that we're pretty representative of the demography of our scene. If you



want to find four Arabs to play in a punk band and that's important to you, I think you should think about why you would ask that. We're four individuals who come from the New York punk scene, and this is for better or for worse what it looks like. Also to the point of experiencing the kind of negative critique of other people, it's been a really odd three years and things have moved really fast for this band, and my preconceived notion of what it was to be in a band that toured a lot has been completely smashed by doing this. We're very much in a bubble. We very much don't really hear what people have to say about this specific issue, which surprised me. I've heard very little about the fact of like, the three of us are not Arabs, we're not Muslims, we're not this concept of the "other." You're very isolated.

Mike: Yeah, I feel like you only ever had out of all of us any experience of someone asking about that.

James: Yeah, I think being Australian, sometimes that kind of critique comes in a little more candidly and straight from some of my friends from Australia, and one individual said, "Do you think this is a bit tokenistic?" And you know, they're not wrong. In a way, identity politics is a part of what we do, there's no disputing that, but...

Nader: I welcome these people. I would love to have conversations with these people, I love the challenge of this controversial topic in today's world, and I really hope these people aren't just harboring this, and spreading it in a negative way, but if that's something you want to talk about, that's something I'm ready to talk about, and there are very strong values that I hold that can combat what we're talking about here.

MRR: I want Martin...because Martin, it turns out, I just found out that you all go way back. People see you from the light of just "You're a member of Haram." They don't go "Your Nader's friend since kindergarten." So I'm just curious...?

Martin: Yeah it just plays off from what Mike and James said, but in the sense that I've been around Nader for long enough to see a lot of what has inspired the band, or part of it anyway. Just to see him being treated wrongly because of who he is, so, whether it was in grade school, or outside of that. But if I can, as James said, use my musicianship to create a platform so that he can speak about that, then fuck what other people think.

Nader: And that's something that people, for example, on a surface level wouldn't see, you know what I mean? Like you just said, you only see Martin as a member of Haram, until you learned this. Martin has seen these things and Martin shared that connection with me, so you know what? Identity at that point is null and void because we've had an experience together, and this is represented in the music in some sense, and I think that's important. I wonder, what people that have that handicap to hearing that [think]. Say like, OK, well this person is a member of my band, but he's also been through my life as well. It shapes it a little bit more. It's a lot more convoluted than just, you know, you're an Arab front-person, but you have a white backing band. It's less simple. It's not as simple as that. It's very important to me as a topic to talk about.

Mike: But at the end of the day we're doing the instrumentals, and we don't have the

message that Nader has, we don't have these experiences. We've seen them, Martin especially has seen them, but we did not experience them, they are not ours, so it's absolutely right that he is the face of it, that he is the heart and soul of it.

Nader: Let me go off from that real quick, sorry to interrupt.

Mike: Not to lessen ourselves, but yeah.

Nader: I always have this internal conflict when I think about this because it's very easy to feel like I'm discrediting my band members when someone's coming up to me and being like: "Wow! Haram! Dude it's so amazing that you did this!" And like: "You're doing such an important thing." Well, you know, without my bandmates I wouldn't be able to do anything like this, and they're just as important as anything I have to say, and I hold the value of my message to them as well, and it's really just a team. We're a family in a sense, and we've gone through things now, as a band, that I don't know if I could've gone through alone, or I wonder how it would've shaped me elsewise, if I didn't have this support system around me. I can go to my band for anything, and it's the trust that I have with these people that have allowed me to do this, so there's also that level of importance, that is able to have this creative project move forward. And it's something I worry about a lot. I hope that you guys feel that. If I'm the face of the band, and you're the neck of the band, then the face doesn't move without the neck. That's the way I see it. Seriously. *[laughter]*

Mike: Well it's like, identity politics aside, we're just four people that have become really, incredibly close friends. The identity politics thing is such a skewed, obsessive thing, it's like, no. This worked because the four of us came together, it did not work prior to the four of us coming together, it only became a thing because of the four of us.

Nader: It's funny because in New York, at least, I think—I don't want to take credit for it—but it seemed like I didn't think about the band as a force of identity politics from the very beginning, to be honest.

Mike: It's the works people make for you.

Nader: Not even! I don't feel like anyone made it for me, outside of people creating that experience, right? But when we had us playing, and with Krimewatch starting around the same time, we had this wave of very, very heavily "in your face," "this is what I stand for," heavily politicized bands... It wasn't received as well as I thought it would be, you know? I mean, we do have a lot of support, of course. It's an amazing experience and opportunity to see the world, and spread this beautiful message.

I dunno, I feel like you have to ask questions before you can make a judgment, and I don't mind if you make a judgment, I'm not going to control what you think, but again, I think if you have an opposite opinion, you should always bring that to the table. Someone recently told me, "Yeah, fuck conservatives. I would never want to talk to a conservative." And I was like, you know what? I'd love to sit down at a desk and talk to a conservative, and constructively have a conversation. I feel like I'd learn a lot. I'd rather almost talk to them more than a liberal in that setting. In a face-to-face conversation. Because I think that's how you defeat these controversial topics. Come to compromises. Because without difference, there would be nothing for me to fight against. If everything was on the same page, which I guess is the goal...

It's not that currently, that's not reality. Reality right now is you have these terrible toxic people and policies and sides of governments that are really just dehumanizing swathes of people in the world and to be in this country and to be raised here and to believe in equality and freedom and be raised with all of these principles of America and to grow up and to realize that's not really there, it's only getting worse every day now. It's a strengthening, an empowerment when it comes to being in a band like this, and I think that has really pushed me forward personally, but going back to the original question, I think we're a unit and we move forward as a unit, and without my bandmates, the conversations that we have are extremely important to the music that we write. Without any of the content, I wouldn't be able to do this, I don't think they would be able to do this the same if I weren't here, either, so it's a very...it's a handshake, and that's really what it is. For example, we were talking about this new record. We came up for the whole concept of that record on a bus, on a sweaty bus ride going to the airport in Stockholm, Sweden. It was a 20–30 minute bus ride, and we had an intimate moment before we all talked, and we had this whole concept, and now we're working on it. Without that friendship, that compatibility, that would've never happened. That was one of the most important things to me, and I welcome anyone to talk to me about it.

MRR: I think there's something really interesting in what Haram brings. I find that there's an uneasiness, an uncomfortable sort of feeling that happens because between your songs you're

saying stuff, and there's this thing of, like, "I don't understand what he's saying." And it creates this...it's almost that you're forcing the listener: "I'm fucking talking to you. Listen to me. You can't even walk away from this right now. You are here with me right now and I'm going to go." And I love the way you do that. It forces the listener to be like "What's going on? What's happening? Is he yelling at us? Is he saying something nice? Is it...?" I love that sort of level of uneasiness that exists because I think in an American context, at a US show, or a European show, you create this sort of...maybe a discomfort? And I think that's awesome. You have to be. You're a punk band. But how does it look to you? How does it feel to you? What is it that you try to evoke when you're doing a show and you utilize language and the power of that language, especially in these quiet moments when there's not music backing it up?

Nader: I'm so glad that you asked that because this is something that I think about a lot, of course, but that atmosphere of discomfort... I love that relationship when you could be performing and then become an audience member, and the trades between that, the feelings of those two positions. When you're watching a show, typically you're given everything, and in life, in this country, I feel like you're very used to be given everything. There's a problem, there's an explanation of entropy: it's everything is given to you, and I feel like I've been surrounded by that my whole life, people that just receive things, but they're not thankful or grateful for it, they are just used to always having a resolution.

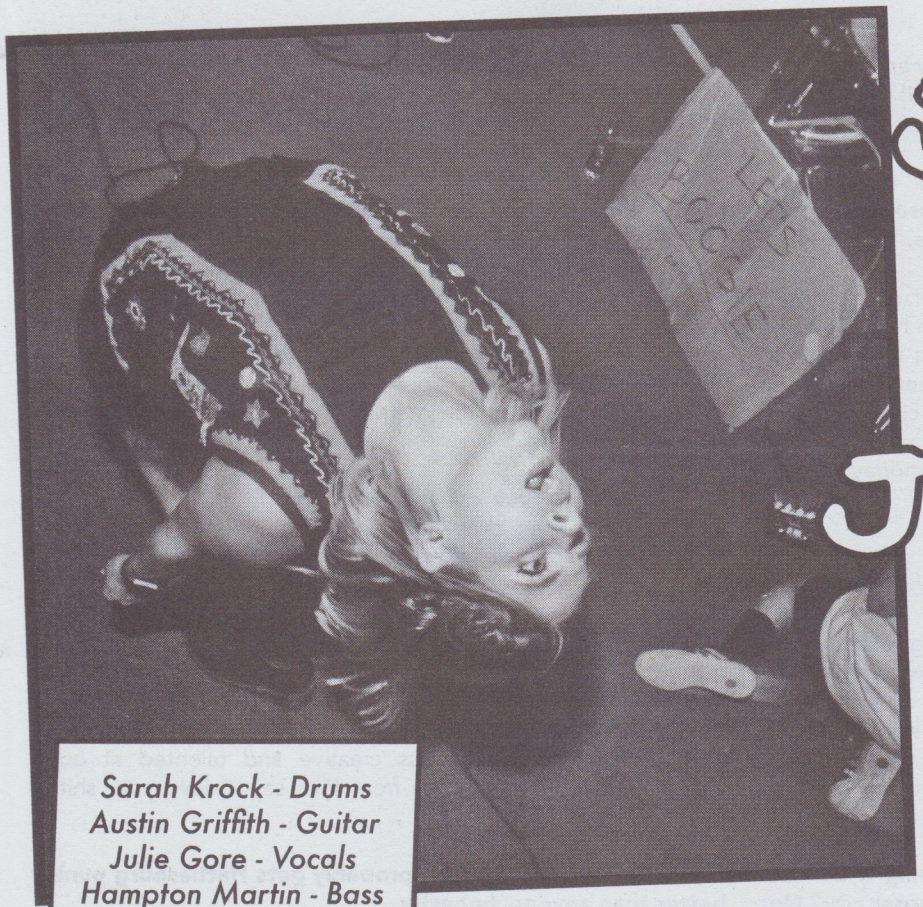
So there's two points as to why I speak in Arabic and very rarely speak in English during our sets, from the beginning to the very end. It is that feeling of: "You don't deserve to know what I'm saying." And if you feel uncomfortable by it, that is a challenge to the audience to see if you could handle hearing something that you don't understand and not be threatened by it, and wait, and hold on to your emotions, to ask a question, to see and find out and educate yourself, as opposed to developing a judgment before you are told what you are hearing. And that's something that's extremely important to me, especially with Arabic, because when I was growing up post-9/11, Arabic became something that was so demonized. There were people that heard Arabic and had an automatic association with something that is violent, and negative, and threatening, and intimidating. And to me, Arabic, it was my first language, it's something I saw the beauty in at a very, very young age. I learned to read and write it at about six years old. I didn't understand what was happening at that point in time, post-9/11, and now I feel like it's just gotten stronger. I remember being younger and looking forward into the future and being like, "This is all going to go away. This is only because of this major trauma that has happened from this event." It's only gotten worse. It's only deteriorated, and now you have people that will yell at hijabi women on the subway, or that you have people who can't even stand to hear this language, or see anything associated with radical Islam, or terrorism, or any political event that happens in the Middle East or in the Muslim world, and going back to just performing, like in my own performance, yeah, it is something to challenge the crowd... There have been some few instances of people coming up to me, the most extreme case was at Static Shock, after we played that set. This person came up to me and they were like, "I think that's stupid." Just flat out. And I was like, "Why?" And like I said, I was challenged, I love it, and they were like, "It excites me in a way I can't explain, and I think it's stupid." And I was like, "I admire your courage; tell me why?" And they were like, "Well, if you're trying to put across this political message, this political point, to a predominantly English audience, wouldn't you think to explain what you're saying?" And I was kind of blown away, because it's true, in a sense. I could see how someone could come to that conclusion. And I was like, "Well, again, I don't think you deserve to know, until I'm done and the space that I've claimed for my twenty minutes is now someone else's." You can come up to me after the set. I don't hide from people, I sit every show, right in front of the venue, very open to anyone that comes up to me who wants to talk and ask questions at all. To me, while I'm performing, or we're performing, and I have twenty minutes that I can call my own, that I can claim as space to call my own, I'm gonna do what I wanna do. If it is something that intimidates or threatens you, well, you have an internal problem, and you may be dealing with some ignorance that you might've not known that were there, and that's something I really want to draw out in people. It includes people of our community as well. This is internal ignorance that some people aren't even aware they have. There are things that are so deep-rooted, you don't even realize it. It's a result of many different things. Media, family views and values, or whatever. There are a lot of different impacts on people, and I'm not trying to say, "Oh, if you have that ignorance, you're a terrible person." It's like no, rethink your ethics, maybe this is something you want to dissociate from, and that's really my whole message. That this is a beautiful language and culture and it's been thrown out, it's been demonized, it's been made to look evil, and cutthroat, and there's a problem with that. I was raised on both sides, and there's things and experiences that I can't even talk about on camera. There's things that completely shaped the person I am today, and

trauma, and if it's going to be my space, and that's the way I look at it, that's the way I look at the stage. It's a beautiful thing: one band gets up, I respect it as their space, and I like to sit in the audience and see what they're gonna do with that space, see how they move around and see how they claim it. When it's my turn, you're gonna give me that same respect that I give you. And even as an audience member, you should feel the same way. If you're not performing, you should see the divisions between each band, and respect each space. And seeing diverse bills and crowds as well, and having conversations with people is everything, you know? The band itself is important, to me, playing is really important, but what trumps all of that is having the conversations after the show. All over the world at this point, which is so hard to fathom, that we've gone that far, the conversations we have with people after shows is really what drives me from day to day. Being back at home, and struggling to make money just to be able to even do this at this point, it's all I have left in my life. That's really what makes it worth it. To be standing here and talking to you is what makes it worth it.

You know, I think us as a band, if I can talk for all of us, I think we're very self-aware, and we really can't understand how it's gone this far. When you tell us, "hey, I think your band is important for this and that reason," it makes me think wow, how did this all happen? That confidence isn't there, it's not like we deserve to be here. It's always been a humbling experience. Every time we go anywhere, it's like: "Wow, we're here. This is amazing. This is something that we're going to try to take as much away from as we can. This is mind-blowing."

Mike: Definitely, in comparison to any other band I've been in...
Nader: Mike's been in a few bands before...
Mike: Just based on any other one, there's a completely different dynamic. This band, everywhere we go, like you said, it's the conversations that keep us going. Every other band, it's just, "this is a party." The tour is a party. There's nothing else to it. It's just a party. This one, it's like, there is something very real, substance behind it. Sure, I really put my heart and soul into the other bands, but at the end of the day, the show is a party. There's never been a huge concept, there's never been politics or anything behind it. We're not just a show, we're trying not to be just a show, just a performance. It's a conversation, which I think is important.
Nader: For example, for the demo, we had it all in Arabic. And the thought there was, "Hey, take that, scout out an Arabic-speaking individual, which you will find around you, especially if you live in New York, and ask them! Interact with what you have in front of you." I speak a Lebanese dialect of Arabic, which is broken Arabic pretty much. Slang. So any dialect, it works out, because any other Arabic speaker should be able to understand. It's like speaking English and you're from the Bronx. People will pick it up. I hate... going back to "why is everything given to you," like you pick up a record, ok cool, it's in a different language, cool it's translated, oh sweet, I have everything," and then you throw it behind you and you never think about it again!

haramharam.bandcamp.com



JUDY AND THE JERKS

Sarah Krock - Drums
Austin Griffith - Guitar
Julie Gore - Vocals
Hampton Martin - Bass

Intro and interview:
Jesse Moore of Eye Jammy.

Photos:
Leah Rials, Anora Walper, Erin Croxton, Olesya Ufimstev, Martin Sorrondeguy, and Garett Fisbeck.

"Whassup, we're Judy and the Jerks!" The explicit mantra quirkily spoken at the end of the first song during every Judy and the Jerks live set. Judy and the Jerks are a punk band from Mississippi's Hub City, Hattiesburg. Formed towards the end of 2016, the four-piece came together to split the atoms of fun in hardcore punk. So far, so good, so what? A hyperactive blend of sugar high hardcore, soda pop punk rock, and creature comfort catchiness. Mutant pets, mythical monsters, junk food, and things that go bump in the night all exist side by side in their neck of the woods. A few self released tapes, compilation spots, Midwest / Southeast tours, festival appearances, and hosting countless touring bands in Hattiesburg have kept the band busy for nearly two years. In early August, they are touring the Wild West Coast for two weeks, so try to form some friendships in the pit with 'em. I recently sat down with the four rockers I'm proud to call fam and had the same conversation we've all had a dozen times before, but somehow even goofier this go round. Check it!

MRR: Is there a particular style or concept Judy and the Jerks keep in mind when it comes to music? What's the big idea?
Hampton Martin: I don't think that any of us are well-spoken enough to have some fucking "here are some strong ideas," so the next best thing was just to be real damn goofy with in our music or the lyrics and artwork.

MRR: I know you as people and everyone is conscious, but would you say the Judy and the Jerks message is partying and having fun?
Austin Griffith: Partying and having fun with your friends is definitely the message.

MRR: Respect!
Hampton: Respect is the message.

MRR: What is everyone's individual place in the Hattiesburg punk community? What roles do you all play to keep shit poppin' off?
Sarah Krock: All of us book shows. Those of us who play in bands are responsible for getting gear and the PA to the show. I lived in a house show spot, between the Porn Hall and Spice World for four years so there's that.
Julie Gore: We all take part in shows. Show flyers, event pages. Promoting shows. Bringing friends.
Austin: Trying to keep people excited about touring bands that are coming through.
Sarah: Austin and Hampton pit the most. I'll say it.
Julie: Me and Sarah *think* about pitting the most.
Sarah: We talk about it. Oh, yeah!
Austin: You need at least four people to pit for it to not be

weird. We need me, Zach [Burton, of Eye Jammy and Big Shot], Hampton, and Jesse out there to get it started. If we get Julie and Sarah to do the goose mosh, we're in business.

MRR: So everyone gets down with the usual show responsibilities, organizing, making sure people have a response while the bands play. Anything else, like *cooking some food*?
Julie: I feel like me and Sarah used to cook for every show. I guess it's a good problem to have, but now we have so many shows and so many people come to the shows now that you can't cook enough for everybody. You try to feed the touring bands, but everyone ends up eating, which is cool because I love to feed friends but it's not sustainable on a weekly basis. It's great when you have the free time and extra money to make it work.

MRR: Anything else?
Austin: For some reason posting funny shit in our Facebook event pages is a big thing here, and we all get in on it.
Hampton: It seems like the more funny pics and goofing around there is on the event pages, the better the show turns out. It's like when I see event pages for other shows in different cities, there could be 300 people attending, but if there's nothing funny on the event page it's like "where are the memes, everyone here is way too serious." Or the band descriptions are so bland you don't even care.

MRR: What are your favorite aspects of being a band in this small town community as opposed to a larger city? Not knocking anyone else's turf, but what are the pros of being in Hattiesburg?
Hampton: A lot of the shows are over pretty early, which is very cool! *[Everyone agrees.]* People talk to the bands that come through on tour.

Austin: It's really small, so we get to feel all tight knit and close, but it's so small that it's pretty noticeable if a few people are missing at a show.
Julie: If a Hattiesburg band is on tour or something, there's a noticeable dent in turnout.

MRR: Does Judy and the Jerks draw from influences that might not be expected?
Hampton: We're all entry level ska fans.
Julie: Look out for our entry level ska tape.
Austin: Hampton and I are youth crew fans, but I'm not sure how that factors into our sound. Or maybe it does?
Julie: 'Cause we're a real tough band! We get our toughness from youth crew. And our silliness from ska.

MRR: I need the toughest kids available hanging around, watching my back. That's why y'all are my crew. What are some of the most effed up comparisons you've seen thrown around or heard from people describing Judy and the Jerks?
Julie: Somebody said my delivery reminded them of a young Nick Cave. I had to look it up. And I still don't get it. *[laughter]*
Hampton: Someone on the internet said you have a bratty-slash-bitchy voice. Bitchy?

MRR: Don't you dare call Julie a bitch!
Hampton: The first tape had a lot of people calling it real garagey? I don't know if that's just the recording style or what.

MRR: It got you on Gonerfest. That's what that meant. The only garage in Hattiesburg is right here at our house.
Austin: Someone said Dead Kennedys and Dangerhouse bands.
Hampton: Baghead! *[laughter]*
Austin: Someone basically said "A less talented Warm Bodies."
Hampton: Which means less creative and talented at our instruments. Didn't someone from Rixe say "I love your shit-punk"? *[laughter]*

MRR: The French Oi! scene probably gets Hattiesburg punk better than anyone, honestly.
Hampton: Our sister scene, really.

MRR: Hattiesburg rocks together. What are other bands you've all played in or are currently playing in?
Hampton: It would be easier to name bands we haven't played in.
Sarah: Currently I am in Judy and the Jerks, Eye Jammy, Big Shot. Previously I've been in Big Bleach, Baghead, Holy Teen, and Kpyto and Lizard Queen.
Austin: Judy and the Jerks, Soft Spot, and Control Room. Previously played in Can't Talk and Chokers very briefly, and filled in on bass in Kpyto a couple times if that counts!
Julie: I was in Can't Talk as well. I am currently in Judy and the Jerks, Big Shot and Soft Spot. I also played drums in Chokers for those two shows.

MRR: You played bass for Baghead Canada in Canada that once! You were in the Void cover band too yo! For the wrestling themed show.
Hampton: Currently I'm in Judy and the Jerks, Eye Jammy, Big Shot, Tag. Previously I was in Full Body Japanese, Baghead, Lizard Queen, Big Bleach, Kpyto, Headcase.
Sarah: You were in Dumspell for a minute!
Hampton: Six months.

MRR: You were in Candy Paint and the Limbos. Small Man for that tour.
Sarah: Me, you, and Jesse were all in the Limbos at some point. I totally forgot!

MRR: Surprise! We're having a Limbos interview after we wrap this one up. Is there anything you would like to see change about the current state of punk? What bums you out? What's sick?

Hampton: Grindcore resurgence. I feel like the rock'n'roll phase of punk is fading out or maybe that's my own wishful thinking. Definitely psyched on the faster hardcore bands popping up. The faster stuff and the true weirdo stuff.
Sarah: I don't mind rock'n'roll. Saxophones are hot.
Hampton: Mmhmm. Saxophones are hawt. I'm noticing like more funkier influences in bands are popping out. Eye Jammy started that and set if off. I'll say it. We need more extreme mosh maneuvers. More pit antics. More beef.
Julie: More funky mosh!
Hampton: More wrestling-influenced goofs in the pit. Coordinate it.

MRR: At what point did you all see punk as something you could do yourself?
Sarah: I started going to shows when I was like fifteen, and it was awful and I hated it. In Jackson, it was just a buncha white boys playing pop punk. I went because of some of my close friends were going or in bands. I never felt like it was something I could do until I moved to Hattiesburg. Zach, Hampton and I lived together and they started Full Body Japanese. They were like "Hey play bass, learn an instrument." I did and then here I am now.
Hampton: Same thing with drums. We told you for like two years.
Sarah: Then I did and here I am now!
Hampton: It's all you think about, really.
Austin: I had recently moved to Hattiesburg, and Julie and I were looking for things to do. We loosely knew some people who attended shows at the Porn Hall. I've always had at least a shallow interest in punk music because of growing up as a skateboarder. It's just there. I always thought punk was cool as fuck, but never imagined I would be participating in the ways that I am today. My first shows at the Porn Hall and seeing regular people playing pushed me toward it. Once I knew Sarah and Hampton better, I asked them about starting this band. I was already playing guitar, but not punk riffs.
Hampton: You two approached us for, like, awhile before it actually happened.
Julie: Let's talk about me! I have played music my whole life because of family members who played in bands. I was in my high school band and also played bass in a shitty cover band. So it's always been around. Once I started going to house shows and seeing how that worked, it didn't seem as hard as what I thought. I got comfortable enough to ask if it would be cool to get together and start something! After I graduated I had more time to be more serious.
Sarah: We were originally gonna be a doo wop band.
Hampton: I still don't know what that means! I played in a church band first. My biggest show. I was playing in punk bands for a long time, but I feel like I wasn't involved. I feel like there's a difference. I started attending shows around eighth grade moving between Kansas City and Jackson, Mississippi. Wherever I could and thinking it was so cool. Once I started playing the music myself, I was like, "this isn't that hard. *Cool!*" I started trying to get more involved when I moved back to Jackson with booking shows, but we all know how that goes. It just never works there. I can't tell you why. It just doesn't. I needed somewhere to live, so I moved to Hattiesburg with Zach and Sarah. Right away we bought a super used drum kit and started playing. So the idea was "Hey, let's start writing these bands we like and try and get them to come play Hattiesburg." We couldn't promise them much, so we promised them a good time. Then things started happening and it's been that way for like four years now.

MRR: What was your intro to hardcore punk music. How did that happen for y'all?
Julie: I'm really into Ty Segall and the girl who played drums for him some years ago, Emily Rose Epstein, always wore a Void shirt. It looked cool so I looked the band up. Then I ordered a Void shirt on ebay. That's my intro.
Sarah: My first hardcore band shirt was Bad Brains "Banned in DC" I think the first punk band I ever listened to was Blink-182 or Title Fight or some bullshit.

MRR: I think the better question would have been what was your first hardcore shirt.
Austin: Billy Joel.
Hampton: I think mine was Modern Life Is War. I hated the shirt but I was like, "Nice, I got one."

MRR: What's everyone's favorite shirt they own now?
Austin: Urban Waste, you already know
Sarah: I wear this Sheer Mag shirt like every day, so.
Hampton: The Coke Bust shirt is classic. My Kicked In shirt that's just holes now. My Truth Inside shirt is the most comfortable.
Julie: Either my OG Void shirt or my Baghead shirt, I'll say it.
Austin: Baghead was our first real intro to hardcore punk that wasn't bad.
Hampton: Didn't some hardcore band punch you? Turnstile or someone?
Austin: I got crowd killed by someone in Twitching Tongues

[laughter]
Hampton: Scene beef. B9 board that fucker. My intro to punk in eighth grade was listening to a lot of CKY and somehow GG Allin. It was a strange time. There was a cool guy at my high school that wore like Guns Up, Strike Anywhere, MLIW shirts. I wanted to be cool, so I started googling punk bands and ended up finding the *American Hardcore* soundtrack, and that was the real intro.

MRR: Do you think the reputation Hattiesburg has for being "cute" and "wholesome" is accurate, or is that annoying?
Austin: We're tough as nails, fuck that shit. *[laughter]*
Hampton: Any combination of the bands or people here is always gonna be goofy.
Julie: I'd say there's some truth to the stereotype.
Sarah: It's 'cause we don't have assbeater breakdown riffs.
Hampton: Or 'cause we don't live in a city where everyone's pissed all the time.
Austin: If we were pissed all the time, we wouldn't have a scene anymore.

MRR: OK, we love being cute. What's it feel like to play live as Judy and the Jerks?
Hampton: Like I'm on top of the fucking world!
Julie: All of the fans chanting my name! Nothing like it.
Austin: Goin' berserk, dude.

MRR: What's everyone's favorite cover from the Judy and the Jerks repertoire?
Julie: Mine's "Floorpunch."
Austin: We covered "True Colors" in Chicago when we played with Give and Protestor. Some hardcore kids were two stepping and it was the best night of my life.

MRR: Shout out Chi-Town Futbol. That place is the bomb.
Sarah: My favorite cover we've done was "Falling Apart" by Civic Progress. I listened to that song a lot, and learning it on drums was really fun for me.
Hampton: That time we did "Six Pack" at our second show. "Biscuit Power" by Gorilla Biscuits lately. We covered a Deedee Catpiss song during the battle set.

MRR: You also covered seven Void songs at the wrestling-themed covers show.
Julie: We did! We covered "Ready To Fight" that time in Tallahassee. Then Protocol did it the same night.

MRR: That was the night I wrecked my knee and became old.
Sarah: That was your pit retirement party.

MRR: Goodbye hardcore. Is there anything you would like to change about the band or mix up?
Hampton: I wish we would all jump more when we play.
Sarah: I can't.
Austin: More jumps. More ska. More guitar solos.
Hampton: Julie, I want you to do more funny speeches. More public speaking.
Julie: You know how much I love public speaking.
Sarah: For me, I want more blast beats

MRR: Have you done anything with Judy and the Jerks that was bad or that you aren't psyched with? The death metal show in Nashville?
Sarah: So we were on tour and our friend from Spodee Boy booked us a show. They couldn't play the only available venue available because they had been banned from playing there. So it was Judy and the Jerks, a harsh noise act and some death metal. We played first and Hampton broke the E string during the second song. Hampton asked if he could borrow the bass and the room was silent. The thirteen people there. Hampton dropped an octave and we played the set. Then the metalheads pity clapped for us and it was sick.
Hampton: That was also the biggest stage I'd ever played on. We got $20 and it was all just really goofy, but we had fun hanging out by ourselves. No one talked to us.

MRR: Has life changed at all as a result of playing in Judy and the Jerks, or have you evolved in any ways?
Hampton: I think musically we've all gotten better at our instruments.
Austin: We've gotten better at our instruments and become closer friends. Speaking for myself. I've gotten way more involved in the local scene and DIY in general, it's been really cool.
Sarah: We've had some amazing travel experiences and will have some more in the future.
Hampton: I feel like when we recorded the demo, Sarah you had only been playing drums for two months. And Austin you had only been playing punk riffs for a short time.

MRR: I just wanna say from the perspective of a homie outside of the band who has been close with the band since it started that I've seen Sarah start drumming and become...
Sarah: A *staaaar*!

MRR: Austin and Julie, same for them, watching them blow up. And Hampton, since Judy and the Jerks, you became the recording guy for all of our bands and got skills. I feel like

it sparked from necessity but you followed through and put in work. Nice one. What are some of the best Judy and the Jerks gags. What holds up?
Hampton: The Hot Potato set between Deedee Catpiss, Eye Jammy, and Judy. We put seven minutes on a timer, when time ends you hand your instruments to the next band, and whoever was playing when the timer went off lost. Then reset the timer and eliminate the last band. Winner takes all. It forced you to play your songs that much faster, which was sick.

MRR: That was a rush. One that sticks out in my mind was that Judy and the Jerks all cut sick wrestling promos for the last cover show.
Julie: I love the tiny splash cymbal we take on tour. The only constant in my life.
Hampton: The jazz intro.
Sarah: I really miss the "Let's Boogie" sign.
Hampton: I think it got retired at the final Porn Hall show.

MRR: So there's this West Coast tour coming up hella fast. I've been on the last two Judy and the Jerks tours and it was all smooth sailing. Is there anything about this tour that's got you anxious? Long drives, "Where the fuck are we staying"...
Hampton: Waiting on some shows to confirm, but that's just life.
Sarah: This is the farthest west any of us have ever gone.
Austin: Big vacation. Gonna have fun no matter what.
Hampton: Definitely gonna be so far out of our element. It's gonna be like "I don't know what any of this is." How do people pit here? Am I gonna look like an idiot. I don't own a leather jacket.
Sarah: Or are we tall enough? Everyone is taller!
Hampton: I'm constantly convinced everyone is older than us.
Julie: Everyone's taller than us, cooler than us, better dressed, stronger...
Hampton: Every tour I've ever been on is me constantly wondering like, "What are my dogs doing right now?"
Sarah: I'm always convinced my dogs ran away and whoever is watching them just did not tell me and is sending old pictures of them like "looook!"

MRR: All right, well, have fun. I'll be here watching the dogs yo. OK, finally, describe Judy and the Jerks with one word.
Austin: Goofs!
Hampton: This sucks.

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COLOR TV

THE SELF-DESCRIBED "BITTER, SPITEFUL, PIECE OF SHIT" FRONTMAN OF MINNEAPOLIS'S BELOVED CITRIC DUMMIES, DREW (NO RELATION) AILES, FINALLY SAT DOWN FOR A TALK WITH PALS FROM COLOR TV. HIS REASONING: "TO MAKE UP FOR MY DELIBERATE YET EGREGIOUS SOCIAL FAUX-PAS, I AGREED TO INTERVIEW COLOR TV." SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.

INTERVIEW BY DREW AILES.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM OLMSCHEID AND CONNIE VOLTAIRE.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY NIRZAR PANGARKAR

CLAP SOUND

MRR: You did the "clap," right? Well, you film shit, don't you?
AJ: Uh, no.

MRR: No?
AJ: No, I just do photography.
Devin: What do you call that? What's that thing called?
AJ: The...the...
Devin: In the movies...the little
Matt: What's that board?

MRR: Cutting board? No...a cutting board is for cutting things.
Devin: They say "cut" though, so...
Matt: You may as well call it a cutting board.
Devin: There's definitely a name for it. I dunno.
[it's actually called a clapperboard, or slateboard, or time slate]

MRR: The questions that I have, some of them are like...
Devin: Woah, you actually wrote questions down?

MRR: Yeah!
Devin: That's so nice of you!

MRR: I just jotted down a couple things to make sure I don't forget stuff.
Devin: That's nice, dude!
Matt: That's what an interviewer is supposed to do!
Devin: Yeah I know, but he, like, planned ahead. I've never done a MRR interview before, so...

MRR: Well...MRR is just whoever sends some shit. It's not like I'm an official "MRR Interviewer" or something. I'm pretty sure if they knew who I was they would be like, "Oh we're not taking this."
Matt: Oh, this isn't officially licensed?
Devin: You could just send in one?
Phil: You could just send in one. You could just...some fucking random band.

MRR: I mean, obviously you guys haven't been interviewed that much, but are there questions that you fucking absolutely don't want to answer?
Devin: I don't think we've ever been interviewed ever. Except for that one guy. Where was that? Was that for the City Pages?
Phil: No, it was Bandcamp.
Devin: Yeah! It was Bandcamp!
Matt: [mocking] "It was beeaandceeammp!"
Devin: You know what? I can tell. You want me to take a little break from talking? Sometimes I have to do that. Sometimes my wife will say "just take a five minute break from talking."

MRR: First thing I'm gonna ask is where did Devin come from? Because I've known you three, but I never knew Devin. Like, you're from Portland, but you're from Denver actually, right?
Devin: Yep.

MRR: Why did you end up in Minneapolis, and how did you end up playing with these guys?
Devin: I ended up coming to Minneapolis to study Music Therapy, which is what I do for a living now.

MRR: Where did you go?
Devin: To the University of Minnesota. And I met Phil through my friend Seve who is in that band Public Eye. He told me, "If you're going to be in a band in Minneapolis, this is the guy you should talk to." Phil put out one of Seve's first records when he was in Autistic Youth.

MRR: Autistic Youth was a Portland band, right?
Devin: Yeah. They were great. I mean, Public Eye is actually quite different than what Autistic Youth was, but they were a really great teen band. I pretty much have lived in Portland for the past 13 years, so I watched those kids grow up. And so I've known Seve forever. Seve's the one who introduced me to Phil, and Phil's the one who took care of everything else. Literally.

MRR: He just lined up the main players?
Devin: Yeah, he got AJ and he got Matt. He told me Matt was in Retainers and I listened to them and loved it. He just introduced me to

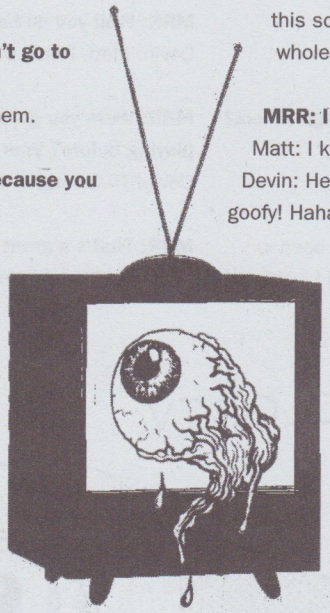
everybody. Whereas when I moved to Portland from Colorado I just met people all the time. Minnesota, as you know, is a little bit icy...it's hard to break in.

Phil: Yeah, I've been playing music with AJ on / off for close to seventeen years and we had a band that ran concurrently to Color TV, so naturally I just pulled him in. As for Matt, I knew him for a number of years from him playing my basement. He was still pretty fresh from moving back from Memphis when I asked him to get involved and it turned out him and Dev had a bunch of mutual friends from touring. So it made sense to pull him in.

MRR: Yeah, very icy. You have to be friends with everybody from high school.
Devin: Exactly!

MRR: Although, I'm friends with all of you and didn't go to any high school with any of you.
Phil: Me too. I didn't go to high school with any of them.

MRR: *[To Devin]* So you moved back to Portland because you finished your program?
Devin: Yeah.



MRR: You wanted to therapize people with music.
Devin: I moved back to Portland to work at a specific music therapy company so I could work with older adults and they hired me, which is why I left. These guys were nice enough to say, "We'll keep doing the band."

MRR: How do you guys keep doing the band? Because I know you have practice all the time. That's usually when I can't hang out with anybody is when you have Color TV band practice. How the fuck do you do that? Do you use that monitor and then your head is there with like a GoPro or something?
Phil: Devin and I usually write through video text messages. We even did this when he was in Minnesota since we both were so busy with school and work. For whatever reason, its worked pretty well.
Devin: So we now do Skype where the Skype would be filming them practicing and I would just play along at my house in Portland.

MRR: Can they see you? Can they hear you?
Devin: Kind of. It was more about being able to talk to each other between songs. When we were learning all the songs for the new record, we had to be able to make sure Phil and Matt were teaching everyone the parts correctly before going in to record.

MRR: You guys are embarrassingly tight as a live band.
Devin: Do you really think that?

MRR: Yes. I don't fucking get it. It makes me mad because you don't even get to practice together, technically.
Devin: That's probably because Matt and AJ are the tightest ones.

MRR: Yeah, but there's still fucking vocals and bass and another guitar.
Devin: Yeah, but don't you think they're the most reliable ones for being tight?
Phil: Definitely. Dev and I are more the songwriters, where Matt and AJ just make us look good.

MRR: So pretty much as long as Matt and AJ don't fall apart?
Devin: Exactly. And Matt never falls apart. And if he does it's like a cool fuck up.
Matt: Well...
Devin: Sometimes you'll hit a note and I'll think "That's not the one, but I liked it anyway!"
Matt: At the show today, I noticed a guy who was really excited about pinch harmonics. *[laughter]*
Devin: I saw that too!
AJ: That's what Matt will do if he's thinking "Oh goddamnit we're playing this song again" and he'll just play pinch harmonics throughout the whole song.

MRR: I think I saw you looking at that guy!
Matt: I knew he was into it so I was like...
Devin: He was just so much like "Yeah! Yeeeaaah!" Oh that was so goofy! Haha

MRR: *[To Matt]* I was talking about you watching TV when you were playing with Joust at Palmer's. You were literally singing and playing guitar, but you were watching TV behind the bar. I remember looking and thinking "Motherfucking Matt is not even paying attention."
Devin: He's someplace else entirely! [laughter] Matt, did you teach yourself how to play guitar or did you take guitar lessons? Because, you know, he can play all that Yngwie shit, you know, "the keys to the Lamborghini" guy.

MRR: That's why I call him the Zakk Wylde of Minneapolis...I would never call you that, Matt, I'm sorry.
Devin: What's the "keys to the Lamborghini" guy?
Matt: Batio. Michael Angelo Batio.
Devin: Have you seen that instructional guitar video of him saying "I'm going to give YOU the keys to the Lamborghini!"? We gotta show it to you.

MRR: OK.
Devin: I'm not gonna take up interview time with it.

MRR: I mean, I think this interview's going really well. *[Editor's note: The "interview" has only been going for ten minutes eight seconds.]*
Devin: Oh, I'm glad you're checking in.

MRR: We're talking about Yngwie Malmsteen and Michael Angelo Batio...Are you guys shredder fans? Do you listen to shit like that? Have you ever had a phase?
Devin: Matt maybe has...
Phil: Matt's a Satch fan.

MRR: Really?!?
Devin: No, no, he's...
[Matt shakes his head]

MRR: All right. So now that we've established the Yngwie Malmsteen and the Matt likes Joe Satriani or something, what are the other

bands...Phil, how many bands have you been in now?
Phil: I, uh, I don't know. A lot that didn't really go anywhere.

MRR: AJ what other bands were you in?
AJ: Yeah I played in hardcore bands. We went through several different names though.
Devin: What was the name of that 7" you gave me?
AJ: Jesus H. Bombs
Devin: JESUS H. BOMBS!!

MRR: Matt, what bands you were in? I know there's a long list. Notably Retainers, which I've told you many times is one of my favorite bands. Not even in Minneapolis, but favorite bands favorite bands.
Matt: Retainers, Cheap Time, and Joust.
Devin: There it is. That's the trifecta.

MRR: Uh, and Devin you were just talking about your band in high school?
Devin: Mmmhmmm.

MRR: ***[laughter]*** **Now you don't want to talk about it?**
Devin: Dude, I've been in some...let's just put it this way: I've been in some bands that are completely different from this band, and I just want to move on with my life.

MRR: OK, so you don't want to have a past stigma.
Devin: Well, it's just, I was in some weird bands. And it was fun at the time, but I'm just ready to move on. So I'll say this: I'm in Color TV and I'm in this band in Portland now called Ad-Noids.

MRR: Yeah tell me about that, because it's not Bad Noids.
Devin: It's not. Yeah they're from Cleveland. That's very important. And I met those guys!

MRR: What is Ad-Noids like? Is it hardcore?
Devin: Yeah kinda. It's like Minor Threat with Michele singing.

MRR: So you're getting older and playing hardcore?
Devin: That's true.

MRR: It's not what usually happens.
Devin: It's all I wanna do. When Ad-Noids first started, Clay and I were writing a song or something. Clay was telling me about how he was doing this other band with this guy that wasn't going well. He said, "I dunno, I don't want to play music anymore, if you know what I mean. I just want to play in a band." Does that make sense? That's where I'm at too. I don't want to play in a band that has like songs. Even though...it's hard to explain.
Matt: You're fucking high.
Devin: I know! It caught on.
Matt: This band has songs.

MRR: This band has the songiest songs of songs.
Devin: We do.

MRR: These are real songs.
Matt: *[laughs and starts mocking "oh-oh-oh"]*

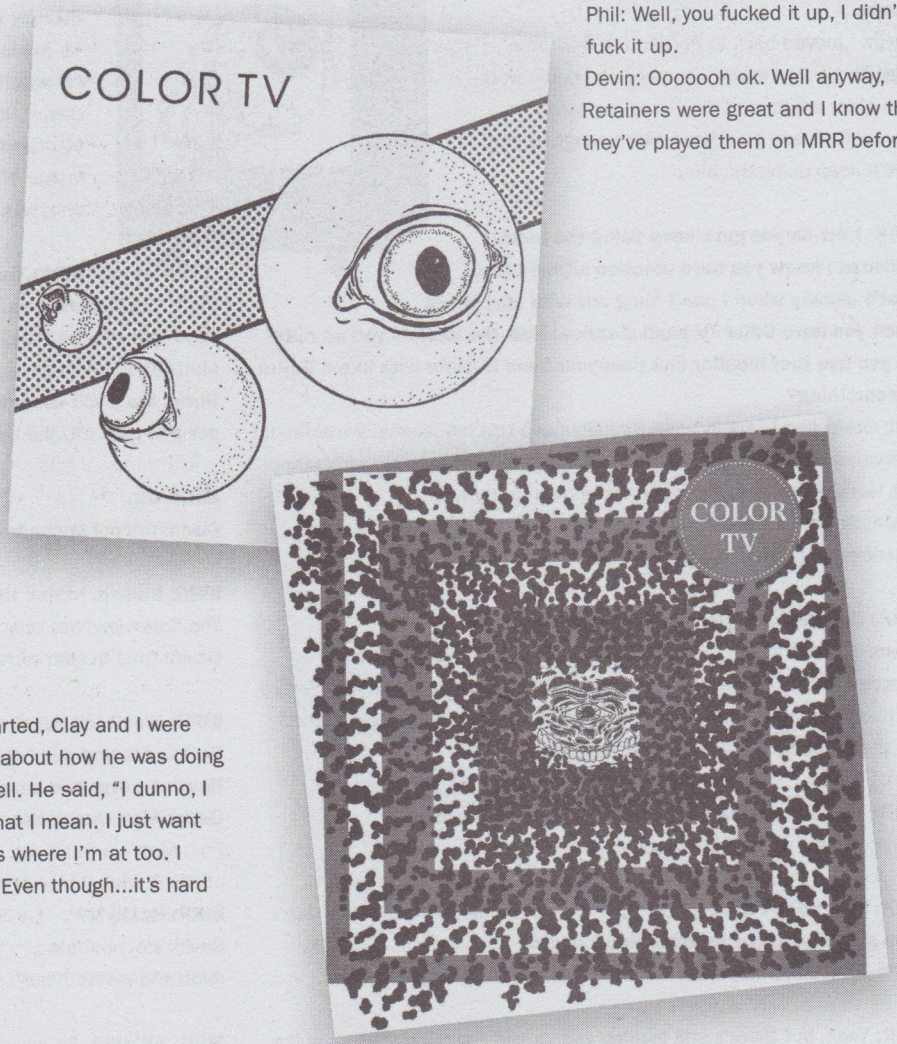
MRR: Exactly! That is a fucking song.
Devin: That's a song right there. You got yourself a song.

MRR: Yeah. Once you do that, or "Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba..."
Devin: Oh I love that part. Matt, you're shredding that. He's been shredding that.

MRR: Well you do backups for the "ba-bas."
Devin: Matt, I wish you would sing backups in every song.

MRR: Were you guys not playing that Retainers song that you were playing before? Was that "ESP?"
Devin: That song is awesome.

MRR: That's a great song.
Devin: But I was listening back to those live recordings and we really fucked it up at Reverie.
Phil: Well, you fucked it up, I didn't fuck it up.
Devin: Oooooh ok. Well anyway, Retainers were great and I know that they've played them on MRR before.



MRR: *[To Devin]* And you were never in any other bands?
Devin: I was in other bands.

MRR: No, you don't have to talk about it.
Devin: I was in a New York Dolls-style glam band.

MRR: Whose record is in a popular pita restaurant shelf. Remember that?
Devin: Oh yeah! You're the one that sent me that!

MRR: Every time I go there to grab Teen Man from Uranium Club's lunch, I see it. They bought it because it looked cool. That's literally why they bought it.
Devin: Really? It looks so stupid. I did the artwork and I'm terrible at graphic design. It looks so bad, dude.

MRR: It's whatever's on the front of it.
Devin: Oh geez. Anyway, I was in a quasi-glam band and I was in a band that was way into the Equals. You know the Equals? "Baby Come Back..."

MRR: Oh, OK.
Devin: We were trying to do the '70s stomp rock thing, you know?

MRR: But now you don't want to play songs?
Devin: I don't wanna play songs, man...

MRR: And now you have a hardcore band that doesn't have songs?
Devin: We just barely have songs. All I'm saying is, it's just nice to not care so much.

MRR: I gotta move on from these questions because I'm thoroughly confused.
Matt: Yeah, let's knock these questions out. You know what I mean?

MRR: I had this question recently where basically they were talking about how they still want to do stuff with their punk band. She said, "I still want to be in a punk band doing stuff." And I said, "Well, what does that mean, what constitutes doing stuff?" She said, "I don't know, just like make music and put it out and have people enjoy it." And to that I said, "Why don't you do that?" We started getting into this conversation about what it means to be "doing stuff" in a band. What should people be working towards? Is it touring fucking eight months out of the year and making chump change? Is it just putting out records that you like that maybe no one else fucking likes? What should people be doing? Is it playing stupid ass fests that are boring and stressful and there's only 200 people there and you play for 50 people even though there's supposedly 2,000 people there? What are bands supposed to be doing right now? Getting as many YouTube plays as possible?
Matt: Maybe, I don't know.
Phil: I just like creating and at the end of the day I only answer to myself. Maybe it's selfish or whatever, but I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy all the highs and lows of being in a DIY punk band. If someone else enjoys it outside of the band, great. I heard Ian Mackaye once say "my favorite kind of music is the music made by people who don't have a choice in the matter." And I think most of my peers and I fall into that category, because we have to and everything else is secondary.

MRR: Like what do you guys want out of this band?
Matt: Make records, travel, and get to tour.
Phil: Record, travel, play to and with like-minded individuals.

MRR: Tour by yourself? Or get to tour Europe?
Matt: Well, maybe eventually if the demand was there for it.
AJ: If there was an opportunity.

MRR: But say there's just fifteen people at every show. Does it suck or are you guys still having a great time?
Phil: For me, it doesn't matter. When I was young I read Get In the Van, and there was a part where Rollins had first joined Black Flag and he griped about having to play a show to only a few people which caused Chuck Dukowski to lay into him, saying something along the lines of "you play just as hard to 5 people as do 500, because those 5 people took time out of their lives to pay to see you play." And the light bulb went off for Hank and it straightened him out and gave him a new perspective. That always spoke to me and I have always been of that mindset from an early age. Some of the best shows I've ever played or have seen have been to just the members of the other bands and I wouldn't trade those memories for anything. I know other people may feel differently especially when you're approaching being middle-aged.

MRR: It probably depends on where you're coming from as a band too. Because if you're nineteen and you've never gone on a tour...
AJ: I know, and that's kind of some of the fun is just being on the road and getting into the stupid fucking antics.

MRR: Eating pistachios everyday in a fart van with the same people...
AJ: So if you are only playing for fifteen people, you have to find something to enjoy about it.

MRR: Right.
Devin: What's your answer? That's what I want to know!

MRR: My response to her was just "Who gives a fuck?" I wanna make music that I like, and that's it. That's all I really care about as long as I like it.
Matt: Living as an artist, I'm going to produce the art and be productive. That's what makes me feel like I'm still a musician and not just pretending I'm a musician.

MRR: You want other people to like it. It feels weird when you're in your 30s and it feels like you're pretending. "Oh, I started playing in a band and we're doing some Oasis covers once a week every Tuesday!" And it's like, OK, guys...it's just an activity.
Matt: I'm looking at it more like my life. This is what I'm producing.

MRR: You're being creative.
Devin: That's what I got into music therapy, though. Because I realized in 2011 when my son was born that I can't make a living off of it. And that's okay! I still want to do it and put out records. That part's awesome! But I was putting too much pressure on whether or not I could actually make a living off of it. Now that I've let that go, yet I still have a job that involves music every day, I don't feel so much pressure to break even at this and this and this...That's why we're able to be a long distance band.
Matt: I just want to be productive. And not waste time.

MRR: As long as you're getting that itch scratched.
Matt: And the longer you can keep the one band together making records, the more success I think you'll have. Rather than every time someone moves or quits you have to start a whole new band.

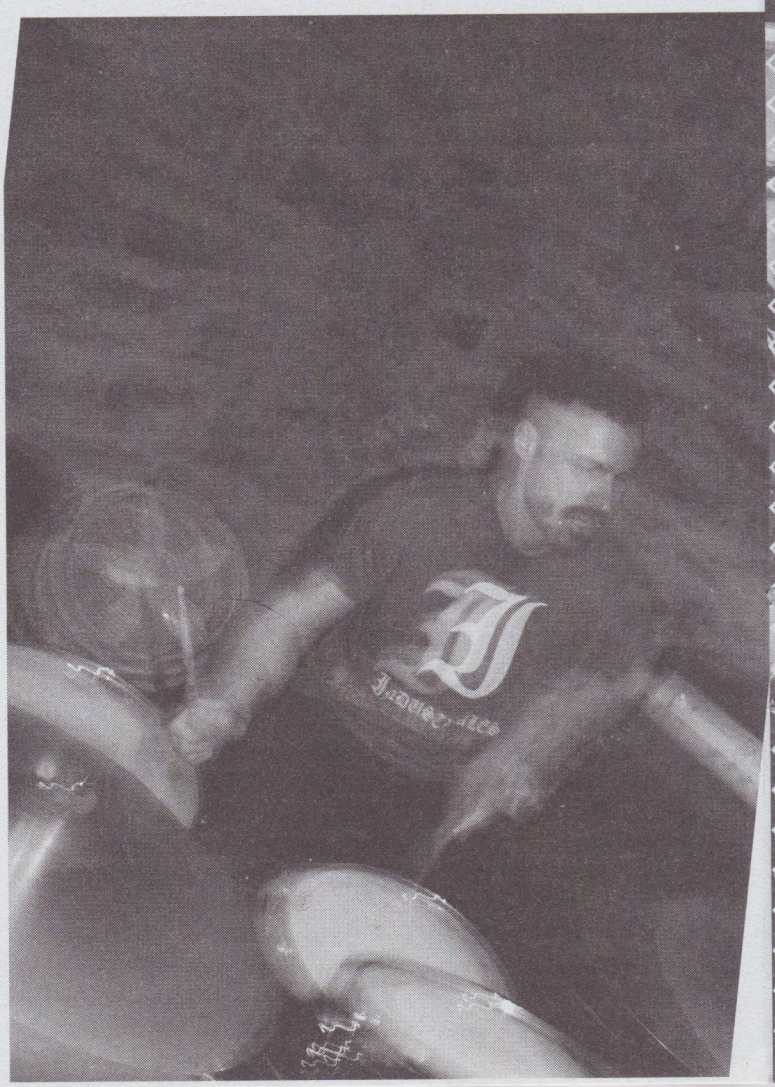
MRR: That's something that I see a lot of now too. Just being able to stick around as a band for ten years...you're not going to be able to make a living, but you might be able to pay one month of rent sometime and that's really fucking cool!
Devin: Yeah!

MRR: I don't even think it's a generational thing. I think people would love to pin it on "Younger people don't get it!" but it feels like there a lot of people who say "OK, I'm gonna start this band...OK, it didn't catch on...OK, I'll start another one...oh, now I'm bored of this...now I'll play something with a jazzy feel...oop, bored of that, get a fretless bassist!" And it's all pretty good, but you wonder why they don't just stick around awhile and feel that style out. I think there really is something to be said for being in it for the long haul, I guess. Just enjoying playing music.
Phil: I suppose I don't care one way or the other. I just enjoy the entire process of creating and crafting songs with my friends. Again, at the end of the day I do it for me, and I am content with that.

MRR: The other thing that I was wondering is, I see it in Minneapolis a lot, where it's hard to find weird shit. Well, I should take that back because today I definitely saw people playing dice in an alleyway and then I saw a little boy pissing on a minivan. But other than that, you don't find these little pockets of weird shit as we get more condos and douchebags from the suburbs get money and start buying houses in the city next to all the shitty places we're renting. I'm wondering, does punk belong out in the suburbs for fucking dipshits or in rural places with the three people who are getting beat up for being weird still? What is the "shape of punk to come," guys?
Devin: I always thought that was such a bold statement. Like, Come on! This is The Shape of Punk to Come...get out of here!

MRR: It's cool to see on a t-shirt, not so much to listen to out of a stereo. I mean, do you think there are less weird people in the city now?
Matt: Than what?

MRR: I don't know...than ten, fifteen years ago?
AJ: Yeah the city is turning into condos everywhere. What are the kids doing?
Devin: I think the kids are still in town. They get eight people in a house, you know? We did that.
Phil: People and places change and you gotta accept it or you're wasting your life dwelling in what others are doing. That's what is going to make you sound and feel old. Concentrate on yourself and the people close to you and create the art you want to see in the world, and don't put too much energy into being overly critical of others.



MRR: Is the same shit going on in Portland?
Devin: Oh, definitely. Even more so.

MRR: But are these kids with eight people per house starting weird ass punk bands and listening to shit that's fucked up and weird?
Phil: Yeah, I think so. Maybe it has fallen off some, but I am always inspired by the different scenes in smaller pockets of the US and abroad.
Devin: Yeah! I do think it's cool that bands like Acrylics from Santa Rosa built their own little scene. And Bloomington too, that's a cool small town...Drew, I love how you've just been...you're not whipping the cat with the belt, but you're kind of...

MRR: Let the record show that I am playing with the cat with a belt per his owner's instructions.
AJ: Purrrrr.
Matt: It's just safer for the cat than a string because he could eat the string and then it could get tangled up.

MRR: So, it's no secret that you guys are #1 on America's hottest music listening platform: Bandcamp.
AJ: Is that true?
Devin: No! Of course not.

MRR: How did that come about, though? You were being featured on bandcamp all of a sudden. Did that lead to anything?
Devin: No. It didn't amount to anything. Except that we had to take an embarrassing band picture that AJ's dad took.
Matt: Whose fucking idea was that?
Devin: It was probably yours.
Matt: No way. I'm the punkest member of the band.
Phil: We got picked for this stupid annual "Best Bands" thing in the local rag and they needed a photo, as did the bandcamp interview, and First Ave asked for a promo shot for when we played with the Descendents. It all happened within the same week or so, that's why we did it.
AJ: It was before we played that Descendents show.
Devin: They were really nice.
Matt: The bass player gave us a shout out.
Phil: Carl.

MRR: Can you hit them up and ask them for things?
Devin: No, definitely not.

MRR: Can't you guys just pretend you're just nineteen? You probably look nineteen to them. Just say, "Hey it's us, Color TV. We just graduated college and we need new drum heads."
Matt: I tried to friend Carl and he didn't respond.
Devin: Ahhh, fucking burn!
Matt: I had a good conversation with him, too.

MRR: I tried to friend the singer of Testament and he also didn't reply.
Matt: It's sad. Next Question!

MRR: Are you guys gonna do any full tours ever?
Devin: Yes! This fall, we're going to do a twelve-day West Coast tour when our LP comes out.

MRR: Tell me about the LP, when does that come out?
Devin: Fall 2018 on Deranged Records.
Phil: We recorded it with Matt Castore at A Harder Commune here in St. Paul and Geza X mastered it.
AJ: Peter Faecke is doing the artwork.

MRR: He's a good kid.
Devin: Yeah. His comics are amazing...Also, let's talk about the fact that Phil is just slapping himself with a wad of cash right now.
Phil: It's wet cash. Devin dropped this in a puddle overnight!
Devin: Shut the fuck up! Fuck you!
Matt: You're scaring Roland [the cat]!

MRR: Do you guys wanna plug any bands that you like? Because that was the thing I liked about reading interviews when I was a kid was finding these bands I like and finding out what bands they listen to. I actually didn't give a fuck about anything else, and I still don't. So are there any new bands that you enjoy? Local or otherwise.
AJ: Royal Brat.
Devin: Royal Brat's great.
Phil: I also like Royal Brat a whole lot. I'm also pretty keen on a lot of the local hardcore and crust bands—Geiger Counter, Shapeshifter, Hellish View.

MRR: Phil, you volunteer at the world's coolest record store. What cool shit has just come out that you dig?
Phil: Oh man, there is always so much. Really enjoying the Deadlock 7", Fetish 7", everything that Tarantüla has put out so far, new Extended Hell 7", Beyond Peace 7", Liquids LP, Gallery Night singles, Maniac LP, all those Andy Human bands, Mutant Video LP, Cold Meat 7", newest Helta Skelta 7", Skinned Alive demo, and a whole lot more.
Devin: Today I got this band Dame from Boston and Kid Chrome, both great. But my favorite band right now is that band C.H.E.W. (who also have a 7" on Neck Chop), and Warm Bodies I love a lot.

MRR: What other stuff are you doing this summer?
Phil: Playing a bunch of shows around the Midwest.
Devin: We're playing Scummer Slam Fest in August, which is put on by Bric-A-Brac Records in Chicago. Nikki Corvette is headlining!

MRR: That's rad.
Matt: *[To Phil]* You got any more of them gummies?
[Phil offers to Devin]
Devin: I can't have any of those because I got "diabeetus."

MRR: You got the diabeetus?
Devin: Wilford Brimley! That's what I really want is a t-shirt of that.

MRR: Did you get diabetes from the candy?
Devin: I mean, not today, but a few years ago, yeah, I actually did. I used to eat way too much candy and I got diagnosed with Type I diabetes when I was 23. I currently manage quite a few things. There's at least five songs in Color TV that are about health conditions.

MRR: Oh yeah? I guess I didn't even bother to ask what your songs are about. I just assumed your songs were about stupid garbage.
Devin: I mean, yeah! Who wants to hear songs? Songs suck!

MRR: So a lot of them are about health conditions and whatnot?
Devin: Yeah, like "To Death" is about taking too much medication and when I used to have a bunch of seizures. I kind of have a complex about it. It's almost like I feel guilty that I have to take medications for things.

MRR: Yeah, there's definitely that line of thinking with people who are suffering from depression where they want to be able to will themselves out of it. It's also this misconception that it's a failure of the self to not be able to overcome it.
Devin: Yep, that's me.

MRR: The fact of the matter is that we live in an extremely fucked up artificial world, filled with extremely fucked up artificial shit and certain genetic combinations don't lend themselves well to that.
Devin: That's exactly how I feel. It's a primal part of our brain that tells us people 50 years ago didn't live with this shit and that our bodies are getting weaker. Or, at least in my brain, I have all this weird guilt about it.

MRR: That's definitely a thing about health in general. We blame all health conditions on people, saying "You're making the wrong choices," but in reality it's just that their choices are fairly limited. It's a really bizarre world.
Devin: Absolutely. I recently went out to dinner with one of my favorite friends in Portland, and it had been a while since I'd seen her, so she gave me a big hug and said, "I'm gonna squeeze the diabetes out of ya!"

MRR: ***[laughter]*** **Did it work?**
Devin: No, definitely not. We were eating sushi so I had to take extra insulin.

www.colorteevee.bandcamp.com

TOUR DATES

MINNEAPOLIS, MN	TUE 10/09
MINOT, ND	MON 10/10
MISSOULA, MT	WED 10/11
SEATTLE, WA	THU 10/12
PORTLAND, OR	FRI 10/13
RENO, NV	SAT 10/14
OAKLAND, CA	SUN 10/15
LOS ANGELES, CA	MON 10/16
PHOENIX, AZ	TUE 10/17
ALBUQUERQUE/SANTA FE, NM	WED 10/18
DENVER, CO	THU 10/19
OMAHA, NE	FRI 10/20

GREAT WIGHT

Introducing Great Wight, a three-piece emo punk band based out of NYC. On their debut album The Surburbs Have Ruined My Life, *songwriter Erik Garlington sings about yearning for community and connection in Midwestern small towns. The album takes me all over the place emotionally, from the uneasy nostalgia of remembering what it felt like to be a self-isolating misfit to the relief and joy of finally feeling a place of belonging in the punk scene. With vulnerability and humility, Natasha and Erik from Great Wight talk about the journey of finding their community.*

Introduction and interview by Vicky Cassis. Photos by Nikki Austin-Garlington

MRR: Hi, Great Wight! Would you like to introduce yourselves?
Natasha: I'm Natasha Johnson. I play bass in Great Wight, and I sing backup vocals on some songs.
Erik: I'm Erik Garlington. I play guitar, sing, and song-write.

MRR: Nice to formally meet you! You all were just on tour in Europe, right?
Erik: Oh, yeah, it was amazing.
Natasha: It was a lot of fun.
Erik: We did five days in the UK and five days in Greater Europe. The first five days were with this band called Fresh from London. They're really good. For the second half, we did France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium with a band called Kermes. They're also very good and also from London.

MRR: What kind of music are the two bands you toured with?
Natasha: Fresh are like indie / punk, I guess you'd say.
Erik: Yeah, Fresh are in the vain of Hop Along or Future Teens; they write just really good emo-pop songs.
Natasha: Yeah, and Kermes is a lot more like your older garage / punk, with more of the rock'n'roll feel of it. There are lead guitars throughout every song; it's phenomenal.

MRR: Did touring with them feel like a good fit for you all?
Natasha: Yeah!
Erik: Yeah! We were originally supposed to go just to play Decolonize Fest, and then our label head told us, "Hey, here are some sick bands, you should hit them up." None of those were really working out, but we were like, "Why not try asking this last band?" Fresh happened to be that last band, and they were like, "Whoa, this is amazing! Your band's great!" And we were like, "Wow, you're great, too!" Then Kermes came around and it all sort of fell into place because we just felt like everything sounded so right together.

Natasha: It was, like, a love fest. *[laughter]* I really felt that way with Fresh. We connected and vibed so hard, and it was a super great time all the way through. And same with Kermes. We got lucky! We get lucky like that when we meet up with other bands to tour with. There are always good vibes and good connections.

MRR: Hell yeah, that rocks. I was wondering because I saw that you recently played Break Free Fest, which had so many hardcore bands. How did it feel to play that fest, being a poppier band?

Natasha: You know, I love POC fests. I love all that. I feel like with this, when you think about all POC bands, you back to the punk, the hardcore, the thrashy. You know, the angst that we have as a people comes out and it comes out in that manner. So, we were the only indie / emo-ish band, period, there [at Break Free Fest] and throughout the scene at any POC fest we've been planning on. It just sets us apart, but in a good way.

Erik: Yeah. Not that it's a bad thing, but it helps us stick out. We're still grateful to be there in the first place. We'd love to see more Black emo / indie bands, but all these bands that came through [at Break Free Fest] fucking killed it.

Natasha: Oh, yeah!

Erik: We were there from 11:00 am to 10:00 pm. We were there, on our feet, all day, watching these bands, and every time we thought we'd go sit down, next thing you know we're in the front watching the next band.

Natasha: Everybody who put it on, especially Scout, was so welcoming. The second we walked through the door, she walked up to us with open arms. It was a good feeling, a beautiful feeling.

Erik: It didn't feel weird at all [being the only indie / emo band], which happens a lot. In Germany, we happened to play a metal show (which we still don't understand why). It was us and three metal bands, and we could tell, like, "This is weird."

Natasha: Yeah, it was metalcore.

Erik: Yeah, Born of Osiris metalcore. So that was weird, but Break Free felt like a family cookout. It was great. We went in and I was like, "Oh, man. Everyone's wearing all black, and I'm wearing bright pink flower pants." But no one cared!

Natasha: And honestly, that metal show was terrifying to walk into. To be honest, you know, in Germany there were no POC. The other bands are literally just metalheads and no bands—I was told by one of the other females there—that ever played there that weren't this classic metalcore. But we went in there, we played, and we were actually well received! So, that was cool.

MRR: How do you feel like you're received in the NYC scene? Where do you all feel like you fit in? I know there are lots of different scenes in NYC.

Erik: We're lucky that we're already in this super inclusive punk and emo scene here.

We've only been around for two years and immediately started playing shows, immediately started meeting bands. We've been playing for eight months and it already feels like we've been a part of this scene for life, so I feel like we're pretty well received. The shows are always great; it's a really good family.

Natasha: And what you said about there being different scenes in New York: we embrace that! We try to get on shows or accept shows whenever we can to be diverse in that nature, and we don't stick with the same three bands or the same aspects. We'll go far on one end to the other.

Erik: Yeah, we play shows with rappers, pop punk people...basically, we just wanna play. Anything we can get into, we're happy.

MRR: This question comes from my bandmate Jimmy: Do you have a specific goal for this project? Like expression, writing that one badass song, a certain level of fame? What's your motivation to be a band?

Erik: I guess when I started out, I was like, "Huh, I don't really see anyone like me in this scene," in every place I've lived. When I was of age to go to shows, I was in Mississippi and Missouri and Kansas, and I was just like, "Damn, I don't see anyone like me here, and it's really weird that I don't." So that's what it started out with. The first song on the album says, "I just want someone to feel less alone." That's the main goal. Obviously, we'd like this to be our jobs. Who doesn't want that? We do this for the love of the game. Getting a paycheck would be great, but I don't think... I mean, in our wildest dreams, if we could be Prince-level famous, that would be fucking great, but it's probably not gonna happen. I just wanna do this, travel, and see my friends' bands succeed and go places.

Natasha: Being in Great Wight for me is 100% feeling accepted. Right? I'm from Delaware, and you've got the pop punk kids, and all I see is white. You see it so much that you don't realize that's all you're seeing, until when it's front of you and you can't unsee it. We just want other people to see that and feel connected and open their eyes and say, "Hey! It's okay! There's us." That connection and that feeling we put out to people... when they feel something, too, it's amazing. Every time we hear it, it's absolutely amazing.

MRR: You know, I've been listening to your album *The Suburbs Have Ruined My Life* a lot, and I love the way it was written. I really feel like I was there with you, Erik, as you moved from the midwest to New York City. Which suburbia are you referring to in that album?

Erik: My mom was in the Air Force for 35 years, so I went from Germany to Mississippi to Guam to South Carolina to Alaska to Mississippi to Missouri to Texas to Kansas / Missouri, and finally I was like, "I've had enough of this shit." So half of the songs are about Kansas City, and the other half are about Mississippi and South Carolina.

MRR: Damn, that's a lot of places to live.
Erik: Yeah, and a lot of bad places in a row.

MRR: Throughout the album, you talk a lot about community and connection in these towns you were living in. What community specifically are you talking about?
Erik: In "It Turns Out There Aren't Many Perks to Being a Wallflower," that was about the community in Kansas City, MO. I felt like I wasn't actually being a part of the scene. I was working at Forever 21 and I had just turned 21. You know, at 21 years old, you think you have everything figured out. I was just like, "All my friends suck. All they want to do is go to parties, fuck around, and not talk about anything that matters." But I was doing the same thing! I'd be right there with them at those parties, bullshitting about nothing, but I still had the nerve to be like, "Everyone sucks but me." So, I went to this Tiny Moving Parts show—this was right when *This Couch is Long & Full of Friendship* came out—and maybe ten people showed up, but those ten people knew every word, and they cared about every single thing they said. And the band was just like, "Yeah! This guy [me] came from another town to see us." That happens with us right now! When we played in France, this guy came from so far to see us and came up to me after to say hi. It makes me want to cry! It makes me feel like I've wasted so much time dawdling and drifting through life, but I've finally realized what I wanna do and what I wanna be about, and this is it. So the community aspect is about the feeling when you finally find where you belong.

MRR: I really identified specifically with that song. It reminded me of a time when I felt really jaded, and I went by myself—in a town where I didn't know anyone—to a Real Life Buildings and 100% show, and there were like ten people and everyone was so nice and it reminded me how much I love DIY and going to shows. I really related to "Perks" in that way.
Erik: Thank you so much, that's amazing to hear. Whenever anyone says anything like that, it's nice to know I'm not alone in that feeling.
Natasha: That's the Great Wight. That's the theme: don't feel alone!

MRR: How do you all feel about DIY and the music industry?
Natasha: I mean, Erik does all of the booking and managing of the band by himself. We haven't really had anyone else involved with that.
Erik: DIY is super important. I've been in bands where we wanted to do it the mainstream way where we felt like we needed to get a manager, an electronic parts kit, and all this shit. But you don't need to do that. You can build your own grassroots-type of movement, you can get your own shirts made, you can get your own records made, and you don't need to go into debt to record. DIY is very important, and it's the most organic way to meet people. If you go to a house show, there are like 30 people built into this scene you can connect with, and it's an immediate way to build friendships or relationships. That's what we've been about since day one. The only way I even know people in this scene at all is from a Reddit post on art / emo [in NYC]. Someone asked what the scene was like, and I said that I didn't know, that I was still trying to find it. I had just been going to shows where no one cared about anything, they just wanted their band to play and they didn't wanna talk to anyone. This guy—who is now one of my best friends named Jackson—was just like, "That's sad! You should come to this show. It's a record release show and it's gonna be amazing." I went, and that's how I literally know every single person I know now to this day in New York. So you need stuff like that. You need DIY, you need house shows, you need little venues that aren't crazy expensive to get into and super exclusive.

MRR: What show was the one that you went to?
Erik: It was for Stay Inside, who are our labelmates and friends, at their record release show two and a half years ago with Good Looking Friends, Nervous Dater, and this band called Sieve from New Jersey. All really good bands, all super active in the scene, all Brooklyn. Nervous Daters have been killing it lately (they just did an Audiotree live session that you need to see if you haven't) and they're all great people, which is what matters the most.

MRR: What is your record label?
Erik: Old Press Records.

MRR: Oh, cool! I was trying to figure out if you all were self-releasing everything, because it's hard to tell on your bandcamp. I thought maybe you were doing the thing where you release everything yourself and sell your own merch.
Erik: So, we were! Then we hit up Tom [from Old Press Records], and he was like, "No contracts, no bullshit." It's super laid back; he's doing it for the love of the game. We don't have any contracts or any kinds of commitments where we have to like, you

know, do some bullshit promo or press. He's just a guy in Salt Lake City who's like, "Oh, you need records? I got you. Just let people know about us and I'll do what I can."

MRR: No judgment in this question, but if a major emo label asked you to put out the next Great Wight record and there was a contract involved, would you do it?
Erik: I mean, it depends on the label, right?
Natasha: Yeah, it depends on the label.
Erik: Yeah, because obviously there are labels with love all the bands that we love and, like, of course we'd go on tour with them and of course we'd do a split with them. There are certain labels that if they hit us up, we'd absolutely do it. 'Cause why not? Obviously there are pros and cons, but I feel like for our scene specifically most labels are trying to help you. Whereas in a pop band, most labels just want to make profit off of you. So, for our scene, we'd absolutely do it.

MRR: Cool, me too.
Erik: Right?! *[laughter]*

MRR: Yeah, I mean, it just depends. This tour you most recently did in Europe, was that a contract tour?
Erik: Nah, it was all DIY. I even booked two of the shows myself, in Kiel, Germany and Decolonize Fest.

MRR: Where was Decolonize Fest?
Erik: It was in London, and I hit them up on Tumblr. They asked me if my band would play back in November, and I was like, "Maybe...?" Then I asked my bandmates, and they were like, "Hell yeah! Let's do it." So we got it done, booked it, set the dates, and then we decided to do a whole tour. It worked out really well.

MRR: Nice! And how was Decolonize Fest?
Natasha: So beautiful. It was amazing.
Erik: We were there for day one, which was Saturday. All of the bands were great, everyone was super nice, and they fed us (which never happens in America).
Natasha: The fest was three days, and there were eight bands per day. The cool thing about Decolonize Fest is that it was a big mix. It wasn't like Break Free, where it was like hardcore punk and us. There was a very large mix of bands and people on the stage, but it was still the same organizing feel of DIY.
Erik: Yeah. It was like Break Free but, like, with emo bands, rock bands, acoustic bands, there were DJs afterwards... it was very diverse.

MRR: Does Great Wight have more plans to tour this year? Are you coming out west so I can see you play?
Natasha: We're trying to come out west, but similar to Decolonize, it all depends on whether or not we're able to play a fest. There were some feelers put out to us about playing a fest in California, and if that does come through, we'll be looking to do like a West Coast thing.
Erik: Yeah, hopefully! I wanna go to Vegas really badly. I did an acoustic tour with my folk punk band a few years ago, and I need to redeem myself for that. But we definitely want to come out west, but, yeah, we're figuring it out!

MRR: ...You were in a folk punk band. *[laughter]*
Erik: Yeah...

MRR: No, dude, I went through a folk punk phase, too. It was deep.
Erik: No, yeah, I still love the folk punk bands, and there are still some really good ones. But yeah, it was a phase that took me way too long to get out of.

MRR: Can I be honest with you about the first thing I thought of when I heard Great Wight? I immediately thought it sounded like Nana Grizol.
Erik: Oh...I love them! I'll take that, thank you!

MRR: I love them, too! Honestly. That was one band that came out of the folk punk phase with me still being able to say, "That shit rocks."
Erik: No, yeah, for sure. That's a huge compliment, thank you.

MRR: Whew. Is there anything you wanna plug before we say bye?
Erik: We're playing a show with Iron Chic on August 17th that we're very excited about.
Natasha: They're one of my favorite bands, period. When I found out they asked us, I was crying. *[laughter]*
Erik: So, yeah, we have that coming up, and we just got vinyl records in from the plug. Old Press Records [dot com], they've got our vinyl, cassettes, and CDs. You should check it out!

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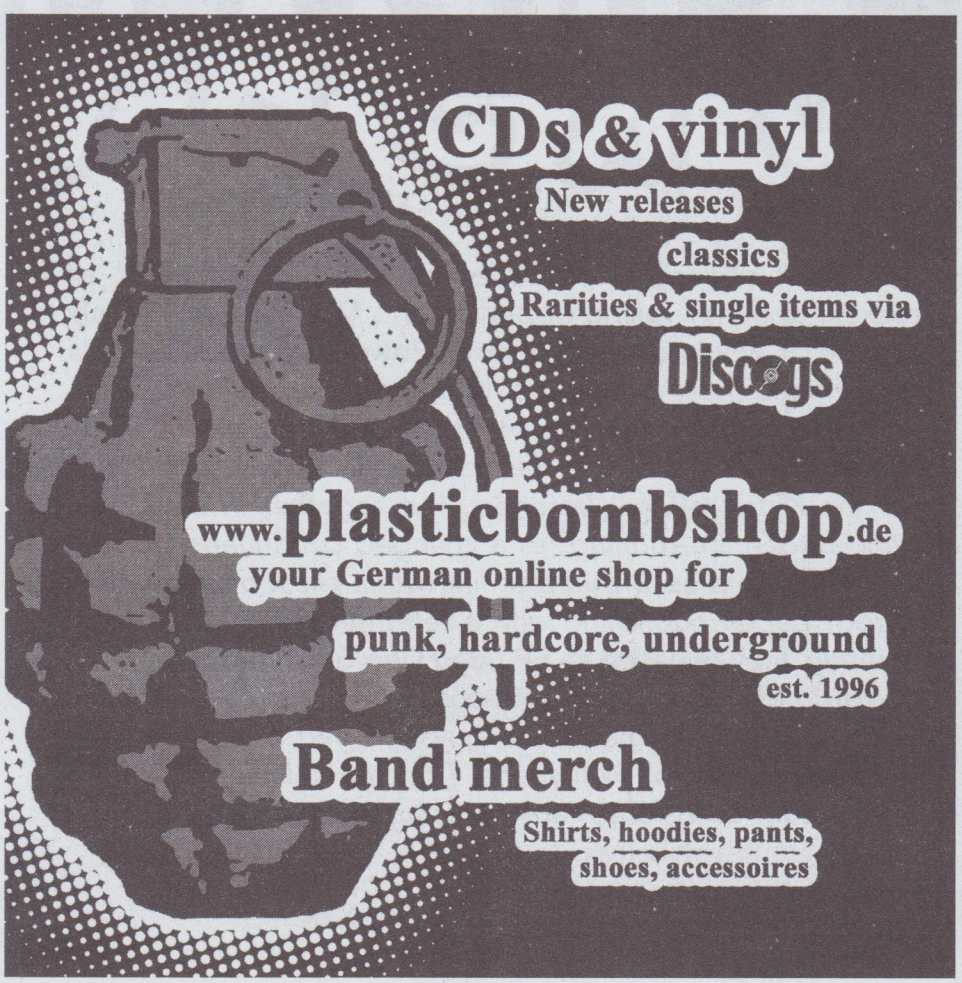

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Introduction and interview by Larry Nance. Photos by Alex Sjoberg and Stine Holme.

Rune – guitar/vox
Mathias – bass
Tobias – guitar
Frederik – drum

Are older siblings responsible for introducing half of all rockers to punk? Taking Copenhagen's Motorsav as the only sample, it would seem the case. However doubtful such a foolish idea most certainly is, their stories are quite familiar. They are of the generation that was inspired to action by some of Denmark's later classics: Gorilla Angreb, No Hope for the Kids, Young Wasteners. Put together in 2016, the band began life running, as a changed continuation of the Torpedo Zombies. Brought to life with a chest of ideas, they quickly began publishing with a self-titled LP in 2017. Most recently, they released an EP titled Den Gule Død. *Playing in and around K-Town, running record labels, and keeping busy with other band projects, the guys are part of the pressure behind the pulse of their scene. They are not the kids sitting on the floor at the show anymore, but they are enjoying the sweaty life nevertheless.*

MRR: Rune, how come you created Motorsav?
Rune: I did a project back in 2008 called Torpedo Zombies with my brother, where we wrote and recorded a 7" in an afternoon. It turned out great and I wanted to continue the project, but my brother has two kids and a full-time job, so he didn't have time for more. So for a long time, I had this project in mind—a sort of continuation. I tried doing it with a lot of different people and different lineups, but it never really worked out. Then, back in 2016, our first drummer and I started and wrote two songs. Not late after, Mathias joined, and it started looking and sounding like something. Some time later, Tobias joined, and shortly after, we recorded our first 12".

MRR: I knew I heard a little bit of Torpedo Zombies in the sound, but the two are not the same. What sorts of things inspire the Motorsav songs?
Rune: I write the songs with some basic riffs, and then we put most of the music together. The musical inspiration is definitely American punk rock from the '70s and early '80s, such as the Misfits and the Ramones. Also the early '00s K-Town scene, with bands like No Hope For The Kids, Gorilla Angreb, Young Wasteners, and Snipers. The lyrics are mainly about war, disease, and anxiety.

MRR: Tell me about your experience with punk. What brought you here?
Frederik: I got introduced to punk rock by my older brother when I was around eleven years old. This was the late '90s, so it started out with a lot of Epitaph stuff, but I quickly got into older punk and hardcore. It was the music side of punk that spoke to me at first. I started playing drums around then, but picked up the guitar in my early teens and started playing in a couple of hardcore punk bands. That's when I met Rune and later on Mathias.
Mathias: It all started in my teens. I grew up a tiny town where nothing happens. I spent lots of hours reading old *Thrasher* magazines, watching skate videos and such. I was also into heavy metal from when I was six years old, so all these things led to punk somehow. I just loved it from the beginning, I guess.
Tobias: I saw the video for "Pretty Fly" on TV when it came out—I was probably eleven years old. I completely loved it. The presenter introduced them as a punk band, which I also thought sounded incredibly cool. I bought the album the next day and listened to it constantly. Through Nirvana interviews, I then heard about tons of great bands, like Black Flag, Hüsker Dü, Bikini Kill, Ramones, Minor Threat, and so on. Dead Kennedys was probably the first band that really made me see punk as something unique from everything else. They had the complete package for me. They seemed super-fast and had the politics and great aesthetics down. I discovered the K-Town scene around 2004–05 and started going to shows in Ungdomshuset with bands like Gorilla Angreb, No Hope for the Kids, and so on. I was floored that something this great was going on in my own time and place, and I have been playing in bands and considered myself a punk since.
Rune: It was mainly my brother who introduced me to punk. I was about twelve years old. He was into NOFX, Rancid, and newer stuff like that. Slowly, I started picking up on it, but it wasn't until I saw the video for Ramones' "Pet Sematary" that I got hooked. I loved everything about the video: four weirdos who looked like they came from another, slightly off, dimension. They looked uncool in an incredibly cool way. Also, the song is amazing.

MRR: I'm merely mortal, and I need to cope. What's a good full LP to listen to for anger? Depression? Anxiety? And I'm asking about LPs to be difficult.
Tobias: There's a time for wallowing, a time for catharsis, and a time for just trying to pull yourself together. For pure cathartic anger, obviously a lot of hardcore punk works well. *Dehumanization* by Crucifix is one of my favorites. My favorite newer hardcore album is *Mind Parasites* by Lebenden Toten. Not full albums, but the pure raging hardcore feeling is hard to beat from the first EPs of Minor Threat and Poison Idea as well as Void's side of the split LP [with the Faith], but I guess you know this. When it comes to wallowing in depression, which I try not to do too often, I think the ultimate record is *Down Colorful Hill* by Red House Painters. For anxiety, I typically want to listen to something soothing. I'm very much into '60s girl groups, and *Presenting the Fabulous Ronettes* could be a good suggestion, as it's also some of the best music of all time. Alternatively, maybe some twee like Tiger Trap or Heavenly.
Mathias: Those feelings are tag-teaming each other, for me, mixing themselves up in one big pile, so *Dehumanization* by Crucifix, Jerry's Kids' *Is This My World?*, Dead Can Dance's self-titled, *Nowa Aleksandria* by Siekiera, *Script of the Bridge* by the Chameleons, Sisters of Mercy's *First Last and Always*, *The Scream* by Siouxsie and the Banshees usually do the trick for me. The Bloodsport soundtrack works wonders as well, and I'm not even kidding.
Rune: I think Black Flag's *Damaged* would be a good contender for anger. That's a record that will make you feel good about your anger, which you should, but also push you to turn it into something productive. Anger without an outlet is a bad idea. Fortunately, it's been a long time since I was depressed, but I can get into a bad funk for several weeks at a time. So for depression, I would prescribe Samhain's *November Coming Fire* and a walk in the rain, on a cold October day. Frederik recommended me that one. It makes me kind of comfortable when I'm in that "mood." No Hope for the Kids' first album has some songs that are, to me, boiled down anxiety. "It's a Rainy Day" is a perfect example. I don't know if it will help or make it worse, but it's a perfect song.

MRR: It sounds like the music was the initial reason for getting into all of this. That was the appeal for me also, but there was more to it that roped me in. What else have you discovered about punk that has kept you around?
Mathias: As a teen, I loved how one was able to just fit in and "exist," even though you felt like a misfit. I guess I still feel that. The sense of community and solidarity in the scene also really appeals to me. The fact that we are all kinda on the same level and that there's no rock star mentality and all that. Thanks to punk, I've met so many wonderful people over the years from all over the world; some I consider my best friends, some I admire greatly, and others I'm just happy to have met. I wouldn't have met my wonderful girlfriend if it wasn't for punk. *[laughter]*
Tobias: The music was what got me into it, along with the feeling of not identifying with the other kids, as well as the politics and ways of life I saw around me. Punk provided an alternative for me, and through this, I have become a part of a community that I can't imagine giving up. So yeah, the combination of great music, community, and a different set of values are what keep me going.
Rune: First off, I used punk as my way of dealing with being bullied in school. It was great to all of a sudden have this thing,

where you could be like: Yeah, well, fuck you too—I don't even want to be what you guys stand for.

I also found a bunch of great friends, shortly after. Even though we lived in a small city, we had a very active punk scene. Of course, it was the same eight people playing in six different bands, but we had fun. What I have brought with me, into adulthood, from the punk scene, is the DIY mentality. It was such an eye opening thing, to realize, that you actually can produce your own records, set up your own shows and tours. Also—the community. I have friends all over the world, through punk.

Frederik: The DIY ethics and the feeling of being a part of something outside the mainstream. And though punk can sometimes be the most conservative thing in the world, I think it has helped me appreciate and understand other kinds of subcultures and weird new approaches to art.

MRR: What is punk like now? Is it genuinely inclusive?

Mathias: Overall, I'd say it is inclusive, but I'm probably not the best judge. There's still work that needs to be done. Obviously we're not there yet.

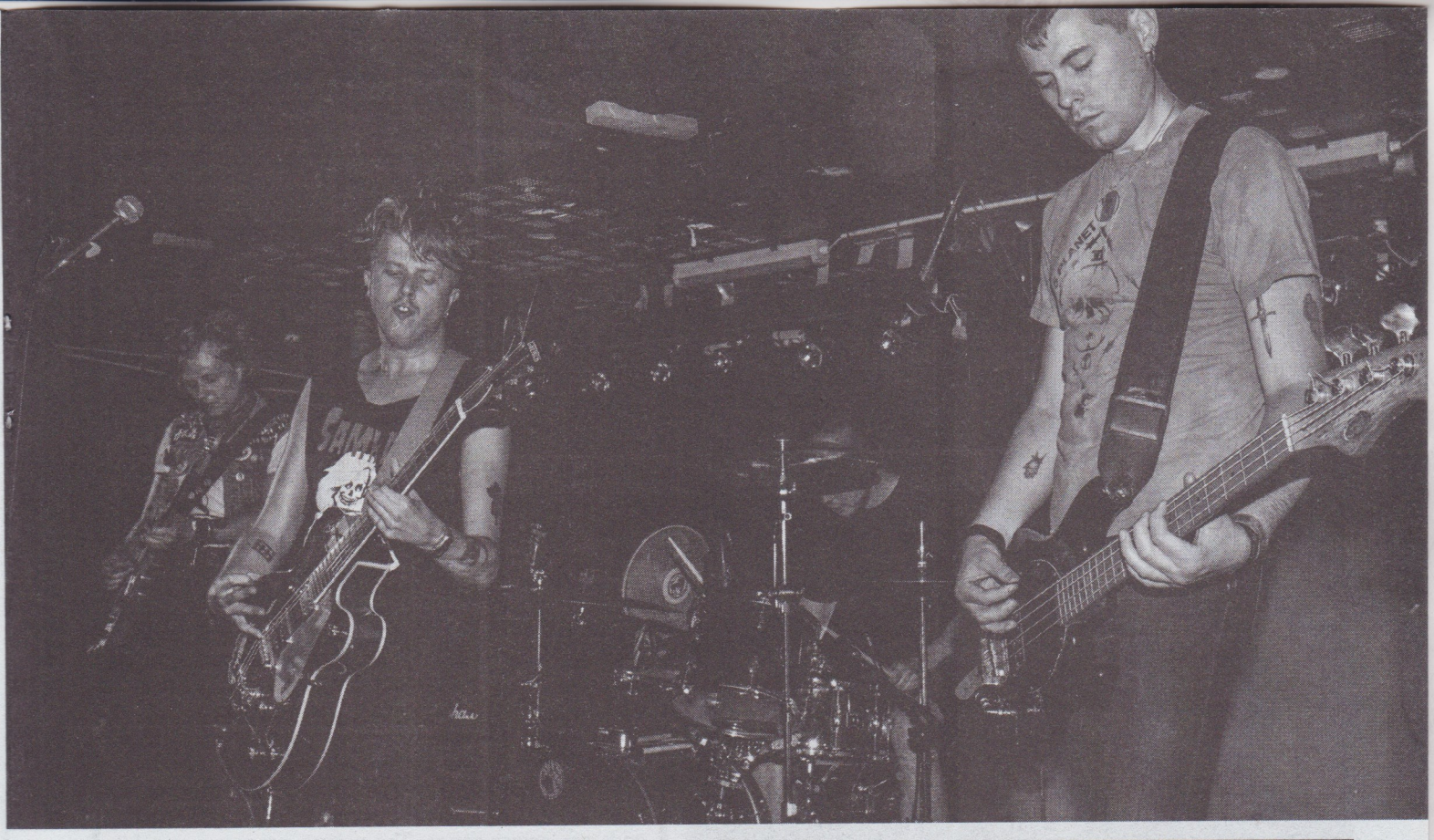
Tobias: That's a very tough question. When it comes to our local scene—on one hand, I feel like there's certainly a more heightened awareness of issues related to gender than ever before. There's still work to be done in this area, of course. The stream of young people joining the scene is slower than it was ten years ago. There's just no denying that. If that's because punk just doesn't grab the interest of young people anymore—for example, because there hasn't been a mainstream "gateway" sort of band in many years—or if it's because the scene seems closed and convoluted and new people feel turned away, I really don't know. It's something I think about, though, as I really want the scene to be welcoming. We could for sure use some new blood, although it seems a little better in just the past year than it's been for a while.

Rune: To a certain extent, I have become rather cynical about the punk scene. It seems that, for a lot of people, solidarity is great, as long as it's free, whether it's emotional or economic. There are too many Facebook posts and not enough action. There is too many people calling other people out and not enough introspection. At least in Copenhagen, several festivals didn't happen, because people were focusing on one another's marginal differences, rather than working towards the greater good. People are too caught up with themselves and their opinions. It's boring. Of course, there are people that work around all the bullshit, and I have been fortunate enough to gather a lot of them around me. I really hope the whole "me, me, me" thing will turn around.

MRR: How does getting older change your perception of being at shows? Ever feel odd when you go see bands play, like you're getting too old?

Rune: Yeah, for sure. It's so weird to see kids that look like they're no more than twelve years old in the pit. Sometimes they can be fucking annoying, but I try telling myself, "You were there twenty years ago. Get over it!"

Tobias: I'm 29 years old, and I would say that's a pretty average age to be in the Copenhagen scene. I definitely don't feel like I'm on the outside looking in. Looking at the younger punks just makes me happy, that they're making sure it's not just an old person's club. It's actually easier for me to feel at home at a show now than when I was a teenager, as I'm more confident now and I know more of the people there. As a fifteen-year-old, it was so wild and inspiring ,and I was just in awe of everyone else there. A lot of the time I would be too shy to talk to people and get to know them, but I always felt like I belonged.



Mathias: I get weirded out if there are lots teenagers at a show, like "what am I doing here? I just wanna go home and sleep."

MRR: You have mentioned Gorilla Angreb, No Hope for the Kids, and Young Wasteners. These aren't new bands anymore, and I'd go as far as refer to them as classics, despite the fact that they were around at the start of the millennium and not during the Cold War; no one chooses their place in time. Classic or not, what do you believe their contribution was to punk music in Denmark?

Tobias: I do consider that wave of bands, starting with Amdi Petersens Armé, as the classic wave of punk and hardcore in Copenhagen—more so than the bands of the '70s and '80s. Internationally, they put Copenhagen on the map, which I think we can still thank them for to this day. Locally, they provide a shared ancestry and an arsenal of great music that most people in the scene can agree on. If you put "Rainy Day" on, people are guaranteed to lose their shit. It's a double-edged sword, though, as it's proven hard for songs by newer bands to enter that catalogue of lasting local favorites, although a few have managed. Personally, those bands proved to me as a teen that punk was still as relevant and great as ever and ultimately timeless.

Mathias: I think lots of people got into punk and the scene around Ungdomshuset because of these K-Town bands and projects. Even today, we're still talking about them and the sound they had. Don't get me wrong, I like many of the Danish first wave bands, but the '00s was the best years for Danish punk, quality wise. No question about it.

MRR: Do you have any hopes that Motorsav will become part of what is remembered best about Danish punk?

Rune: If people where to look at Motorsav, in ten or fifteen years, the way I do at No Hope For The Kids, I couldn't ask for more. I try not to focus on the future, but focus on writing songs that I like and playing shows.

Mathias: Haha! Yes, I'd love that, not gonna lie! But it's not like we've reinvented the wheel, or the deep dish, as the Danish idiom goes.

Tobias: I just want to make great punk rock, and I always try to just be as good as I can be. The reception of it is really up to other people, but if some of what I create, in this group or another, makes a mark on whatever scale, that of course makes me happy.

MRR: I'm aware that this isn't the first rodeo for any of you. Can you give me a quick list of your past projects? And please mention any other groups you are active with currently.

Rune: Selvhenter (snotty hardcore), Skind og Ben (melodic suicide punk), Torpedo Zombies (minimalist aggro punk), Moth (post-punk) and Little Boy Lost (a short lived new wave band). Currently, I have a post-punkish thing that hasn't got a name yet and a solo thing where it's just me, a drum track, some bass, and a synth. And of course Motorsav!

Tobias: My first serious band was the City Kill, which was kind of post-punky, toured Europe a couple of times and released two LPs. At the same time, I had the super stripped down punk band called Even Dwarfs, which finally released a much delayed 7" last year, six or seven years after we disbanded. *[laughter]* Then I played in the hardcore band Brudte Løfter, which toured a bunch in Europe and played a ton locally as well as put out three 7"s. Apart from Motorsav, I currently play in Big Mess, where I'm the songwriter and guitarist. We've released two LPs and a 7". It's a melodic punk band, but in a different way than Motorsav. Doesn't sound as K-Townish—more emo, I guess.

Mathias: I had a band in my hometown with my oldest friend. We were called Grå Stær (the common Danish name for cataract). This must have been sometime between '06 and '08. We managed to play two shows only. Interestingly, one of the shows was with one of Tobias's early projects, though we didn't really know each other at that point. Kim, from Moth, also played with one of his bands that night. After that, I didn't really play that much. When I moved to Copenhagen, I was asked to play bass in Metro Cult, and during that time, I formed Kold Front with Stine and Christoffer. When Metro Cult stopped playing, the rest of us in the band formed a new project called Echo People, which had Patrick, from Moth, on vocals. Currently, only Motorsav is active, as Kold Front and Echo People have been on hiatus / break / lineup changes, but we're shortly starting up again in July!

Frederik: If I remember correctly, it looks a bit like this: 2004–2007: Razorneck (guitar), 2005–2009: Under Al Kritik (guitar), 2007–200?: Skind og Ben (drums at first, guitar later), 2010–? (kind of on hiatus): Snaredrum (drums), 2011–2013 (approx.): Emenkaya (guitar), 2013– currently: Yung (drums), 2017– currently: Motorsav (drums). Besides that I'm trying to get some songs done for a kind of solo project I want do sometime.

MRR: The first release you did was an LP; not the cheapest way to go. Was there any hesitation to begin with a full length record as opposed to a demo tape or 7" to test the waters?

Tobias: I think we felt that the songs were part of the same batch and fit together in our heads, even though there's also some variation on the record. I still like all the songs on the first record, although I like the new 7" more.

Rune: We discussed it a lot, but we couldn't really agree on which songs to put on a 7", so we ended up just doing a 12". I think I speak on behalf of all of us when I say that we were all fairly confident that the songs didn't suck. But it was nerve wracking waiting to receive the record from the pressing plant. I think it turned out well–it sold out really fast.

Mathias: If I'm not mistaken, our initial plan was to record a 7" with just four tracks on it, and then maybe call it quits after that(?!). But one day, only a few days before we hit the studio, Rune had worked on some new songs, and we just went with that! I guess we thought it would be fun to put out an LP, right from the get go. Like, *bam here we are*!

MRR: How does the new 7" fit with the LP? New songs, leftover tracks, a different direction?

Rune: The title track, "Den Gule Død," is an older one. I think we played it at our debut show. The other ones are newer songs. The writing process was a bit different for this one, since we had a lot of problems with drummers. One got kicked out, one was afflicted with typhus (Yep! A form of mouse typhus that you get through handling rodents), and Frederik, our current drummer, lives three hours away. So it hasn't really been possible to meet up on a regular basis and write. I have basically been writing and finishing up songs at home and brought them down for when we rehearsed for the 7" recording. To me, it hasn't been as fun as writing with the other guys. There are actually two or three songs from the session that didn't make it on the 7". I think they're gonna be on our upcoming 12" full length.

Tobias: Personally, I wanted to strip some of the reverb and murk off our sound, and make it more direct. It's probably more of a natural progression than a new direction, as such, but I do think the songs, arrangements, playing and recordings are sharper on this one.

Mathias: An attempt to a different direction I would say. *[laughter]* We worked on several of the songs when Bjørn was still drumming in the band, but none of them have been recorded before now.

MRR: Both of your releases have been split between two labels, Elektriske Plader and Rusted Teeth. Tell me about these labels.

Rune: Elektriske Plader is my old label that I started back in 2010, when I released the Torpedo Zombies 7". I later went on to release old school hip hop, post-punk and other genres. I laid it to rest for some years to focus on a new label called Saudade that is all about post-punkish stuff. I figured that Motorsav didn't fit on that label, so I decided to revive Elektriske Plader! I'll let Mathias tell you about Rusted Teeth.

Mathias: Rusted Teeth is my label. I wanted to have a tape

label and maybe expand into publishing at some point, but I never really got around to taking it seriously, lacking the funds to actually release something. Plus, postage is expensive in Denmark, so people tend not to want to pay for it. At least, that's what I tell myself. Mainly, I've just been co-releasing things with friends in small quantities. The newest release is a tape with post-punk covers of Sabrina's "Boys (Summertime Love)" and Paradisio's "Bailando." Goth summer hits for sure!

MRR: So you release your own work. Are you open to allowing others to put out your releases, or do you prefer to do everything yourselves? If so, why for this project but not others, such as Metro Cult or Moth?
Rune: To me, it just felt like the most natural thing to do. Of course, it would be cool to have labels release our stuff on other continents, but I like picking up the records, being in contact with the people behind the distros, and so on. To me it's not just about selling records. I like being in contact with people. I've even made a couple of friends, selling records. It's fun. Also, I like the complete control you have. If we want to do four different colors of vinyl, we do it. If we want silk screened covers, we do it. Motorsav is a fun band to play in, since the other guys are very open to fun ideas!
Mathias: I wouldn't mind for someone else, other than ourselves, to release our music, but it's fun to do it yourself and be in charge of everything!

MRR: How often do you play shows, and where is the most likely place to catch one?
Mathias: We don't play that often, as our drummer lives far away, by Danish standards at least! Most shows have been in Copenhagen, but hopefully we'll get to tour next year. We've at least talked about doing Europe and Greece on several occasions!
Rune: We have been rather picky with our shows, since we've all played in bands that have over-flooded the Danish scene, to where we've been fatigued with shows. So this year, we have only played two shows so far: one where Gorilla Angreb invited us to play with them and of course K-Town Festival. The next one will be at Roskilde Festival, which is the biggest festival in Scandinavia. Right now, we have begun planning a small tour with our friends Chain Cult, which we are really hoping will pan out. We try to play shows that have a solid lineup or offer an interesting opportunity.
Tobias: Because of living in different places and also having other bands, we haven't played that many shows. Most of them have been in and around Copenhagen. Our only non-Denmark show was in Malmö, Sweden. Hopefully, there'll be a tour next year.

MRR: How connected is the punk community in Denmark? How active is Motorsav with maintaining the health of the Copenhagen scene?
Mathias: Being from Jutland, I would say that everything punk happens in CPH due to its history and the venues. Everyone moves here eventually and the rest of the country is dead. As a band, I wouldn't say that we're doing that much, honestly. But as individuals, it's another story, with releasing music, K-Town organizing, and DJing.
Rune: The punk community is mainly based in Copenhagen / K-Town, since most of the kids from the rural areas move here. To me, it seems that the punk community *can* work together. In my eyes, there are too many enclaves. Come to think of it, I'm probably guilty of this myself. My main focus is the music: doing shows, releasing records, and hanging out with cool people. I'm not sure what Motorsav is doing other than providing a bit of a soundtrack to the scene. We are all more or less politically engaged, but it doesn't show in our music.

MRR: Your local fest is international, but during the course of the year, how connected is Denmark to the rest of world?
Mathias: Pretty well connected, I would say. Touring bands are still somewhat dependent on a Copenhagen show if they are going from Germany to Scandinavia or the other way around.
Tobias: There are definitely people from here that are well-connected internationally, and a lot of great touring bands make it through Copenhagen still. I'd especially say that there's a strong bond to people and bands from Sweden and Norway, but definitely also Germany, Spain, USA, and more places!

MRR: Give me a quick list of bands you wish you could have been in. This will be carved in stone later.
Rune: Bass player for Dee Dee King. That's it.
Frederik: A very short list of bands I wish I could have been in: Big Black, Slayer, Killing Joke, Godflesh, Bob Hund.
Mathias: I'm finding that really hard to answer! Based solely on the music, I'd say: Part 1, Crucifix, Siouxsie & the Banshees, Sisters of Mercy, False Confession. At one point, I wanted to be in Selvhenter! *[laughter]*
Tobias: *[laughter]* Fucking hell. So many great bands that weren't necessarily fun to be in. I would like to have played in Queen, Sleater-Kinney, Crass, Minutemen, Talulah Gosh, Napalm Death, and Discharge (*Grave New World* era).

MRR: Now tell me about some of the young blood of the Danish scene. Who should I check out?
Rune: Ond Tro is great! I'd describe them as hardcore with a death rock / post-punk sound. Cool shit! Also, Jævndøgn is pretty good. When they are mellow, they have a kinda garage-y sound, but their faster tracks are very KBD styled punk. Really cool! Also, Kold Front is great!
Frederik: As I'm getting older, I'm finding it harder to keep up with the new stuff. Mostly, it's new bands by guys my age, but I'm really into Ond Tro from Copenhagen and Tazer from Aarhus.
Mathias: Ond Tro and Junta have really gotten good, so do check them out. Also Jinx, who have one track on the White Helmets Benefit Compilation that Rune and I did the Euro version of!
Tobias: I recommend Ond Tro, Junta, Jævndøgn, Kamp, Úlceras, Zyfilis, Smertegrænsens Toldere, and Noise Family. All are relatively new bands. I'm looking forward to hearing more from the brand new bands Jinx and Enids. I'm probably forgetting something great!

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HEAVY LIDS

Heavy Lids are a band from New Orleans, LA. This interview with Heavy Lids members John Henry and Heather is great.

Interview and introduction by Anita Bump and Richard Milhouse Object.
Photos provided by the band.

MRR: You guys tend to do a lot of stuff yourselves. Your newest record, *Final Days*, was recorded by Michael from Trampoline Team, but a lot of the previous Heavy Lids stuff was recorded by John Henry in the your practice space, which you built yourself. Heather is in charge of screen printing a lot of your merch and record covers. Why? Is it important to you to do things yourself? Do you enjoy it? Is it done out of necessity?
John Henry: I think doing everything ourselves was always part of the process for us. Both Heather and I really get into doing all the art and as much of the recording process as we can. If we had a vinyl press and the tools to master as well, we would do it. I like how each record is its own little piece of time in our lives and we get to pass that on to other people.
Heather: I personally like making sure the art reflects the music the way we hear it, which is why we like to design the record covers and merch. Printing, to me, is the perfect closure to the process of making a recording.

MRR: Which record pressing plants in the US do you think are owned by the farthest-right shitheads?
John Henry: Damn, I don't know. I guess I've been willfully ignorant over the years of putting out records to think that someone that works at a pressing plant might be wearing a MAGA hat. Is the resurgence of vinyl production a right wing plot? I guess at the end of the day, any and all vinyl production is linked to the oil industry, so yeah, there's definitely some shithead involved at some point in the process.

MRR: Your music is generally pretty serious and intense, and your lyrics seem to be generally harsh and take place in a pretty shitty space. How come y'all aren't making records about having a good time with your buddies and appreciating a sunrise and junk?
John Henry: *[laughter]* I would have to disagree with this. I always thought the songs are pretty fun. There is an element of getting out our frustration with the world and other human beings, but I think most of the references in the songs are more telling it straight and not sugar coating it, which can be seen as mean or serious. There's definitely a lot of humor involved, but maybe we're just bad comedians.
Heather: I see the music as flipping the world off while we are laughing. More tough and fun than harsh and coming from a shitty space.

MRR: I think the humor comes through, but it sort of seems like there's a point of view to it beyond just being silly. Like I could name names of bands who make a bunch of bullshit corporate jingles and put that on a record like it's some kind of joke and expect people to buy it like it's a real record so they can get high and laugh about it, but I'm not going to call out Mean Jeans like that. I guess I just feel like when Heavy Lids uses humor it makes sense on a record that is also sort

of serious and not just a bunch of bullshit.
John Henry: We're just saying we are not nearly as mean as we may come off sometimes, but we're definitely not silly. It's more like we're our own worst enemies, and if you can't laugh at yourself or have some sort of self reflection it's not very appealing to me.
Heather: Speak for yourself. I am mean and funny.

MRR: How did this lineup come together? Several of you have played in other bands together before: Static Static, Sex Hunter. How is this band different?
John Henry: I would say all these bands have a similar spirit. Heavy Lids is just this era's version of that idea with some new and old members of other bands we've done.

MRR: Static Static played a show recently as just a two-piece. Are there any plans to do this more regularly, or was this a one-off? How does playing just as a duo compare to playing with a full band?
John Henry: Well, we started the band as a two-piece and a drum machine, so we've just gone back to the original idea. The only thing that really changed is we're both playing keys now. I've been getting these great guitar sounds out of the Korg I'm playing and can really mock string bends with the spring pitch bender. It's pretty fucking fun.

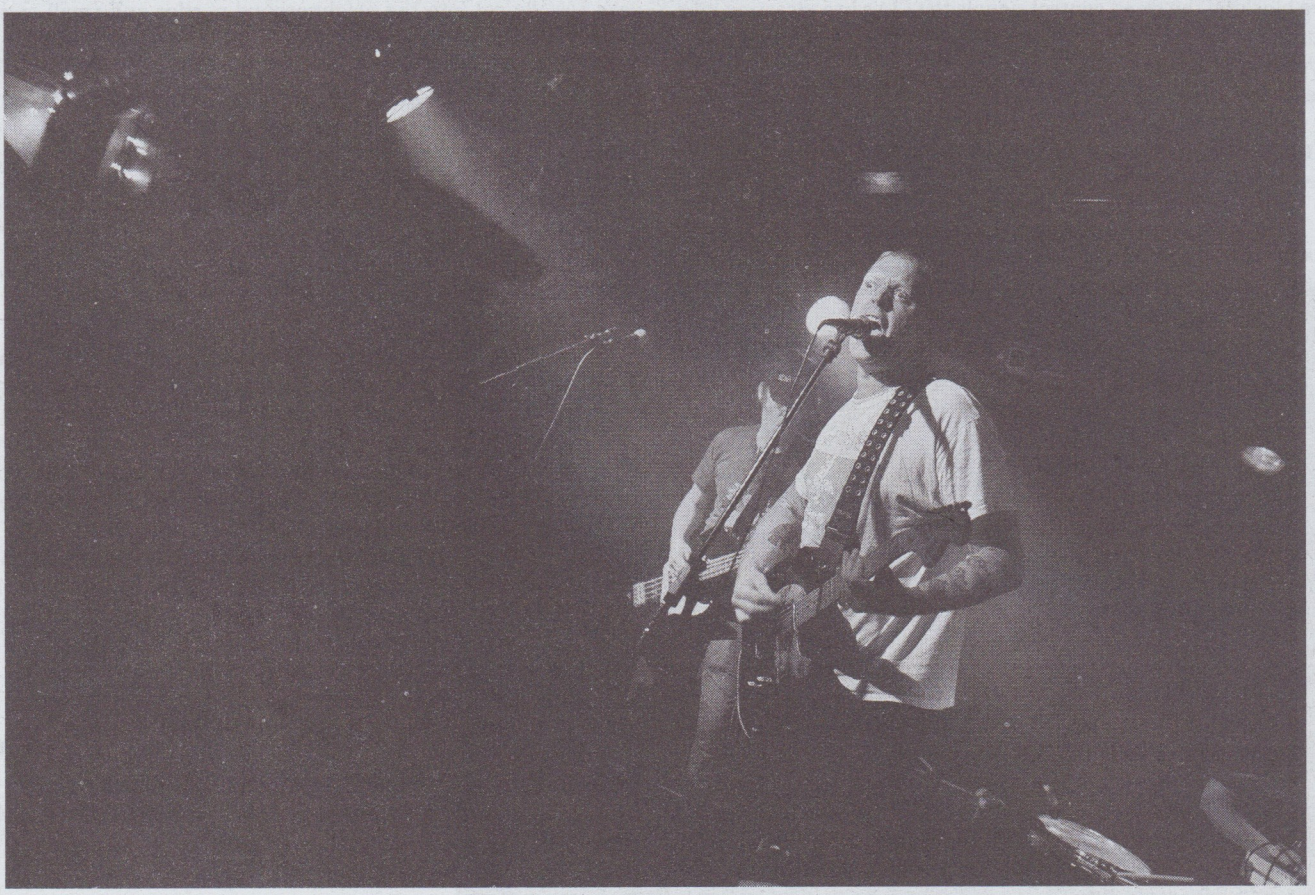
MRR: How do you write songs? Asking for a friend.
John Henry: I get a lot of song ideas from either driving or working. I like to record little bits of ideas on my phone and then bring it to the rest of the band as a demo version. We usually work out the details as we record it and try not to over think it too much. I also like to sing gibberish over the basic song idea and write down what I think I'm saying.

MRR: Have there been any funny or interesting interpretations of proto-song gibberish that didn't make the cut that you'd like to share with us?
John Henry: Yeah, there's a line about "Rainman eating Toucan Sam as the population's getting seasick." I still have no clue what that's about.

MRR: Tell us about your tour diet. What do you eat when you're on the road?
John Henry: I can eat just about anything but try not to eat too much crap. I hate feeling too full before playing. I'd rather be a bit drunk than full at shows. Diner salads are kind of a hit with me, gotta stay regular. Benny really gets into reviewing tour food on his Just Taste It blog, and it's fun finding weird spots to eat. When we were in Europe, I always asked what kind of food that they think Americans wouldn't like and tried to get that.
Heather: I try and eat light, not too much road food. Once I did a whole tour and didn't eat anything out of a bag. I didn't gain any weight that tour. Europe is a whole other ball of cheese.

MRR: What are the best and worst things you got with that approach?
John Henry: I once at a burrito in Denmark, and when I was done they asked me how was the horse. Oh well.

MRR: It seems like people in Europe get really disappointed if you don't want to eat their food. Like they'll bring out some huge hotel pan casserole for your three or four piece band and you'll eat a normal portion and they'll be like, "You didn't



like it?" Have you experienced this?
John Henry: They always want to feed you right before you play. I always hide my food for later. I can't sing when I'm full, I wind up puking.

MRR: When you were on tour in Europe last fall, did you understand everything that everyone there was saying and vice versa?
John Henry: Yes. Most Europeans speak better English than Americans. I kind of like the translation confusion when you're at truck stops. It's a fun puzzle trying to figure how to pump gas or what kind of chips you just bought, surprise! *[laughter]*

MRR: Can we have sort of a roundtable discussion on how you get your tone?
John Henry: Make sure there's batteries in my fuzz pedal and wah, that's pretty much the secret on my end. I always play this one cheap American standard Tele Squier. I've lost a few over the years and they always sound the same when you get a new one.
Heather: I use a Korg CX-3, mine is an early '90s version that simulates a Hammond, played through some various distortion pedals, y'all get the drift.

MRR: What are your thoughts and feelings about tone woods vis a vis tone?
John Henry: I like cheap guitars, so whatever they're made of works for me. Cheap pine does the job just fine.
Heather: We aren't that nerdy.

MRR: In light of the Wikileaks Year Zero revelations, do you feel comfortable using true bypass effects pedals?
John Henry: Well, if the buffer signal from non-bypass pedals are blocking the mind control signals the CIA's broadcasting into our audio electronics, I'll stick with them for sure. That and true bypass effects are too damn expensive.
Heather: I'm not that nerdy.

MRR: Is there anything you do get nerdy about, Heather?
Heather: No.

MRR: What are you listening to lately?
John Henry: The time I was in Europe with Buck Biloxi and the Fucks I bought this comp in Belgium that i've been obsessed with called *Ketters Van Het Vlaamse Platteland*. It's weird new wave and minimal punk, and it's great. I also try to buy stuff on the Walhalla label, which is pretty similar. Been keeping the first Deviants record and O.V. Wright by the turntable as well. Spits, Celtic Frost, Chrome, and the Benni record are always playing in the house too.
Heather: Everything John Henry said. I also listen to Demon's Claws too much. Sun Ra, mostly early. Weather Warlock live stream often runs through the speakers.

MRR: Is your band name a reference to a lid, the old timey volumetric marijuana measurement, or an eyelid, or like you're going to flip your lid, or some other kind of lid?
John Henry: Yes, that reference is definitely part of the idea. It's an altered state reference.
Heather: If someone sells a lid and gives you a little extra, it's heavy.

MRR: The movie? The one where that guy goes into a sensory deprivation tank? I've never seen it but I'm a big fan of the DVD cover.
John Henry: Yeah that's in there too, the whole tapping into the primitive mind in an isolated state. It's a lot like being in a band, except your all in the isolation tank together and someone's always gotta take a piss.

MRR: So y'all are from New Orleans, huh? What's up with that? What's going on there? Is Mardi Gras cool?
John Henry: Mardi Gras is great, but in general, I avoid the French Quarter and all the tourist action that happens at that time of year. I really get into the neighborhood parties and small crew parades that happen and going down under the Claiborne bridge on Fat Tuesday to eat food and watch the Mardi Gras Indians do their thing. I don't really don't love how movies and TV portray New Orleans like there's a parade every day. It's definitely a false narrative. There's is something special, though, about following the sound of music in the ninth ward and running into a second line that doesn't happen anywhere else in the country, you can't beat it.
Heather: I love every fuckin' thing about Mardi Gras.

MRR: I guess we live in different neighborhoods because it's exactly like TV over here.
John Henry: It's more of the bro culture element that invades certain parts of town. It's pretty gross, but like I said, the neighborhood parties are great.
Heather: I worked on Bourbon Street for five years. I even love that part of Mardi Gras.

heavylids.bandcamp.com

SECT MARK

Sunday afternoon, mid-May, Roma. You have ¾ of Sect Mark (the drummer Banfio is not with us) doing what they know best: sitting at a bar table and drinking beer. The unusual thing is the fact that they're being interviewed by Stefano Demented, eclectic writer and Roman noise hero who has had and still has billions of projects going on (System Hardware Abnormal, Trapcoustic, Hiroshima Rocks Around, and many others), a protagonist of that multifaceted and peculiarly Roman artistic phenomenon called Borgata Boredom / Roma Est. Someone describes him as a local Lester Bangs and, well, that seems a good description.

Interview by Stefano Demented.

Photos by Jonathan Clancy, Federico Mazzoli, and the band

Ludovico: bass
Andrea: guitar
Ivan: vocals

MRR: Thank you for asking me to do this interview. First of all I would like to ask you: why did you choose Sect Mark as your name?
Ludovico: It was picked out in a sort of lottery with names written on pieces of paper. Everybody had something like a couple names in mind and got to choose his favorite among those proposed by the others, and Sect Mark won! Do you guys remember the other names?
Andrea: I just remember Filth Cross. We liked it, and in the end it became the name of one of our songs.
Ivan: One of the names was Röm, with the double spots on the O. *[laughter]*
Ludo: In the end, Sect Mark was probably the best name we could have chosen, bit of a grim image. It works well for us, it sticks to your mind.

MRR: Yeah, I also like this technique of the mixed pieces of paper, Burroughs-style, randomly. Does chance also have a major role in your musical writing?
Andrea: Yeah, I think so, we write our songs in a quite spontaneous way. Sometimes I have the impression that when you spend too much time on a song it kinda dies. Generally, we feel immediately if a song is gonna work.
Ludo: Me, Andrea, and Fabio already played together in a previous band [Lexicon Devils], and we already had a kind of synchronicity regarding how to write songs. When Ivan entered the band, he helped us in developing a new and more cohesive sound, more aggressive.
Ivan: I also brought "*ciavattismo*" in the band.

MRR: What the hell is that?
Ludo: Well, "*ciavattismo*" is a kind of philosophy, a religious attitude. When we're touring, Ivan gets his well-known "*ciavatta*" [hard to translate Roman slang—a mix of getting extremely drunk and stoned for many days without hangovers or interruptions], and it keeps going like that for days. I think that this makes a part of the band, we've all been somehow infected and it contributes also to our sound in general. But also "*ciavattismo*" has a limit.
Andrea: Yeah, it's the "Darby Crash limit," it occurs when he stops singing and starts spluttering and you can smell putrefaction in the air.

MRR: So it is possible to say that many things have changed in your transition, in a certain sense a metamorphosis, from the old to the new band.
Ludo: Yeah, we started listening to loads of stuff that is not very common in Italy, many of them generically labelled as "raw punk," connected by their approach to music and the lo-fi sound.
Andrea: I've been into this kind of brutal sound for a lot of years, and I've tried many times to put noise and confusion in our music, but previously I wasn't able to produce anything that was satisfying or close to that. In Sect Mark, we have been able to set certain instincts free in the way we wanted to.

MRR: And you got in touch with this weirdo *[points his finger at Ivan]*. Ivan, tell us something about your musical origins.
Ivan: Well, I have always listened to hardcore punk, but I have been into a lot of different bands: noise, emo, screamo, all those '90s sounds, like emoviolence and stuff, are part of me...I am a person with an emotive character, and I have always liked dark music. You can see that in our wavey side project, Education, which is a way darker approach to punk music.

MRR: That's also because you're a Scorpio and putrefaction is a part of your life! Which are your previous projects?
Ivan: One of the most enduring projects has been Last Days of a Kamikaze. We did a couple recordings, very violent with melodic breaks. Then I had J'Accuse, which was a way more hardcore project, a bit noisecore maybe.

MRR: And who's writing the lyrics?
Everybody: Ciavatta [Ivan]!

MRR: Well, we're remaining on Ivan, then. I guess you're following a precise hardcore / grindcore legacy, with those cryptic lyrics, hard to understand.
Ludo: The lyrics may be a bit hard to understand, but I can easily see that they reproduce a certain way of feeling that's peculiar of Ivan, they express his thoughts. While writing the *Worship* LP lyrics, he's been reading a lot, he's got a lot of inspiration from the poet Sylvia Plath. The first song, "Attempts," is dedicated to her.
Ivan: Yes, it talks about her attempts to commit suicide, which were repeated until she made it.

MRR: And what are the other lyrics about?
Ivan: The demo songs are more connected to our everyday life. They talk about shit happening around Rome, stuff like that. There's a song ["Old School"] that's about some guys in Rome trying to imitate a hardcore scene that doesn't really exist here.

MRR: Real stories!
Ivan: *Worship* is more of a concept album on suicide. It was written in a period when I was reading a lot of stuff about death and religion written by James Hillman. Suicide is an extremely fascinating argument, also trying to understand what are the sensations and feelings that push you to that decision, something that is extremely hard to decode. That was more or less the mood, except for "Spasm Recess," which is about masturbating on drugs but was meant to be in the demo. *[laughter]*

MRR: Maybe this last one was dedicated to me, I often do that. And tell us something about your musical influences.
Ludo: At the beginning, I was more connected to traditional '80s hardcore, from Minor Threat to Black Flag. The noisy stuff from Black Flag and the Germs' cacophony opened a new world in my mind. I was a traditionalist: in my mind, the hardcore days were over in 1986 with the Dag Nasty first LP, *Can I Say*. A bit later, I started to get in touch with new stuff. I have loved Government Warning and Direct Control, and year by year I changed my mind and attitude. I also started playing with a more noise-wave band, Metro Crowd, and that helped me in appreciating more experimental music and stuff, but my soul remains hardcore.

MRR: And who is your favourite bass player?
Ludo: Geezer Butler and Paul McCartney *[laughter]*

MRR: And what about the guitar?
Andrea: I've always listened to tons of different stuff. My first band, more than a decade ago, was a '60s punk band, Back From the Grave-style sounds. I grew up listening to garage punk stuff like Gories, Oblivians, Pussy Galore, Cheater Slicks...hardcore came a bit later. Maybe that's the reason why I love that shit-fi approach to guitar. I like bad feedback, ugly noises, I've never been that much into technical guitar players.

MRR: How did you get in touch with Iron Lung? How did you get there?
Ivan: Well, when we made our demo, I sent the mp3s here and there, mainly because I was looking for feedback, and then who knows. I knew that Iron Lung is a very important label with a wonderful and varied catalog and also wanted to get their opinion. Jensen told me that he liked the demo, so six or seven months later, when the *Worship* master was ready, Iron Lung was on top of our list. I like to think that Jensen loved the atmosphere of our recording and thought that it could fit inside the rest of the catalog, so maybe that's why he decided to do it.

MRR: I saw that they compare you to bands like Void, but I also feel that there are some influences from Japanese hardcore in your sound and other stuff. Apart from that, even if you sing in English, your sound is still a bit Italian.
Ludo: We listen to a lot of stuff. We exchange tons of music every day, and I guess that contributes to hybridate our approach and unify our taste. Coming from Rome doesn't help us see a lot of concerts from the bands that we love, since the city is a bit disconnected and many cool groups on tour don't even come here. We had to arrange it somehow and tried to introduce a difference here, even though I feel that we're still more appreciated in other parts of Italy than in our city.
Andrea: I think that over the last one or two years there has been a further transformation in the idea of DIY punk. Bands have been on the internet for a lot of years, but in the last couple years it became easier to create a small community and get in touch with other bands. That helped us. It's not easy for our band to do tours and go around Europe; it takes a bit of planning and all of us are working guys, so having the opportunity to put our music on the internet helped us in gathering a bit of notoriety in a different way.

MRR: Do you feel that these changes have caused a further transformation in the relationship between forms and contents in contemporary punk and hardcore music? Do you even care about that?
Andrea: I feel it's more or less always like that, it's a bit cyclical. I think that if you asked this question ten, fifteen or twenty years ago and more, people would always say "Yeah, today it's all forms and no content," and so on...
Ludo: I think hardcore has always had an important role as an instrument of protest, and maybe it changed in these years. It lost a bit of its protest value to earn more importance as an outburst against everyday frustration, a way to have fun. Maybe it's a bit sad, but I feel it is like that.

Ivan: I do not completely agree. I feel that also our songs have a bit of political tension in them. We belong to a peculiar area of thinking, we're against all forms of fascism, and it is possible to feel that.
Ludovico: Of course, there is this particular subtext, but maybe the amusing part is still the most central one.
Ivan: Yeah, but that's because the first thing is that we want to play the music we like to see live and listen to.

MRR: And now you're playing a lot more live, aren't you? I see you're going to several fests.
Ludo: Of course, that was the objective! On June 16th, we're playing at K-Town in Copenhagen, and we're stoked to do that. A couple of years ago, me and Andrea were there as spectators. I also almost broke my shoulder...now we're on the other side of the fence, and that is great! In general, we feel like we've been able to enter a circle of great people doing great music, also here in Italy, and it's cool to be a part of that.
Andrea: It's nice to see that there are groups of people who play and listen to music that is similar to yours and like to follow what you're doing, while at the same time you're interested in listening what they do. It's a kind of exchange.
Ludo: Well, yeah, before it was way more difficult. With the previous bands, it was harder to understand what we were doing, who was interested in it and all that stuff. Now we feel like we're concretely part of a small scene and it's great. It's not auto-referential!
Ivan: I think that there is something going on in Italy. It is a good period for hardcore punk. There are some realities that are very valid in some towns, people organizing concerts, doing cool stuff, playing great music. The guys from Occult Punk Gang in Milano—Francesco Goats, the guy who does our artworks, is part of that collective—are doing an incredible work in general, but also people in other cities like Trento and Parma are creating a great movement. It would be great to see something more also here in Roma.

MRR: And what about the audience at your shows? Also generationally speaking.
Ivan: Actually it's very heterogeneous, in general. You can also see people over 40, since we also have '80s inspirations.
Andrea: The public is quite mixed. It's rare to have only 20-year-old or 40-year-old guys.
Ludo: I like the fact that we have also fans who are not completely into this kind of hardcore, since they appreciate our live show.
Ivan: Yeah, we're a nice live band, we have fun playing, and I guess people perceive that and enjoys our shows even more.

MRR: Oh, I forgot to ask: Ivan, who's your inspiration while singing?
Ivan: Myself! *[laughter]* As I already said, my main inspiration is "*ciavattismo*" and the altered state you live while you're like that!
Ludo: It is a continuous surprise for us too! You never know if he's going to throw himself on the floor, get naked with his dresses tore out, or if he's going to play like a classical folk singer, like Riccardo Cocciante [Italian folk-pop singer from the '70s]. We're a bit victims of his emotive state!
Ivan: Well, when you decide to deal with Sect Mark you also have to deal wiih this thing I guess. *[laughter]*
Andrea: When we played in Berlin at Nothing Nice to Say in April, I can remember the organizers were a bit worried because they saw us in very very bad conditions the day before the concert and they thought we weren't going to recover...but we always make it! *[laughter]* We did a good show!

MRR: And what about now? New recordings? What are you going to do?
Ludo: now we still have to take *Worship* around for some time. We have a 10-day European four upcoming in August and September, so...I am also a bit scared of going, don't know if we'll get back alive! In case we'll succeed in that, we're already writing new songs in our garage.
Andrea: We'll see what's gonna come up in the next few years...a group is not necessarily meant to survive for years and years. If the thing keeps working, we'll keep it alive, otherwise we'll just do something different.

MRR: And what about getting a female singer in your band?
Ludo: *[laughter]* More than that, we'd like to have someone like you in our band...

MRR: If you want me I can come with you, I'll bring my saxophone and we could something similar to Fear.
Ludo: I have been told about an episode when you were singing in a place full of shitty people and you broke a crystal table jumping on it!

MRR: It was in Genova, and it was a marble table, not a glass one! Don't even know how the fuck I did it! Well, thanks guys for the interview, I guess our time is over. If you want to say something else, just do it by yourselves!

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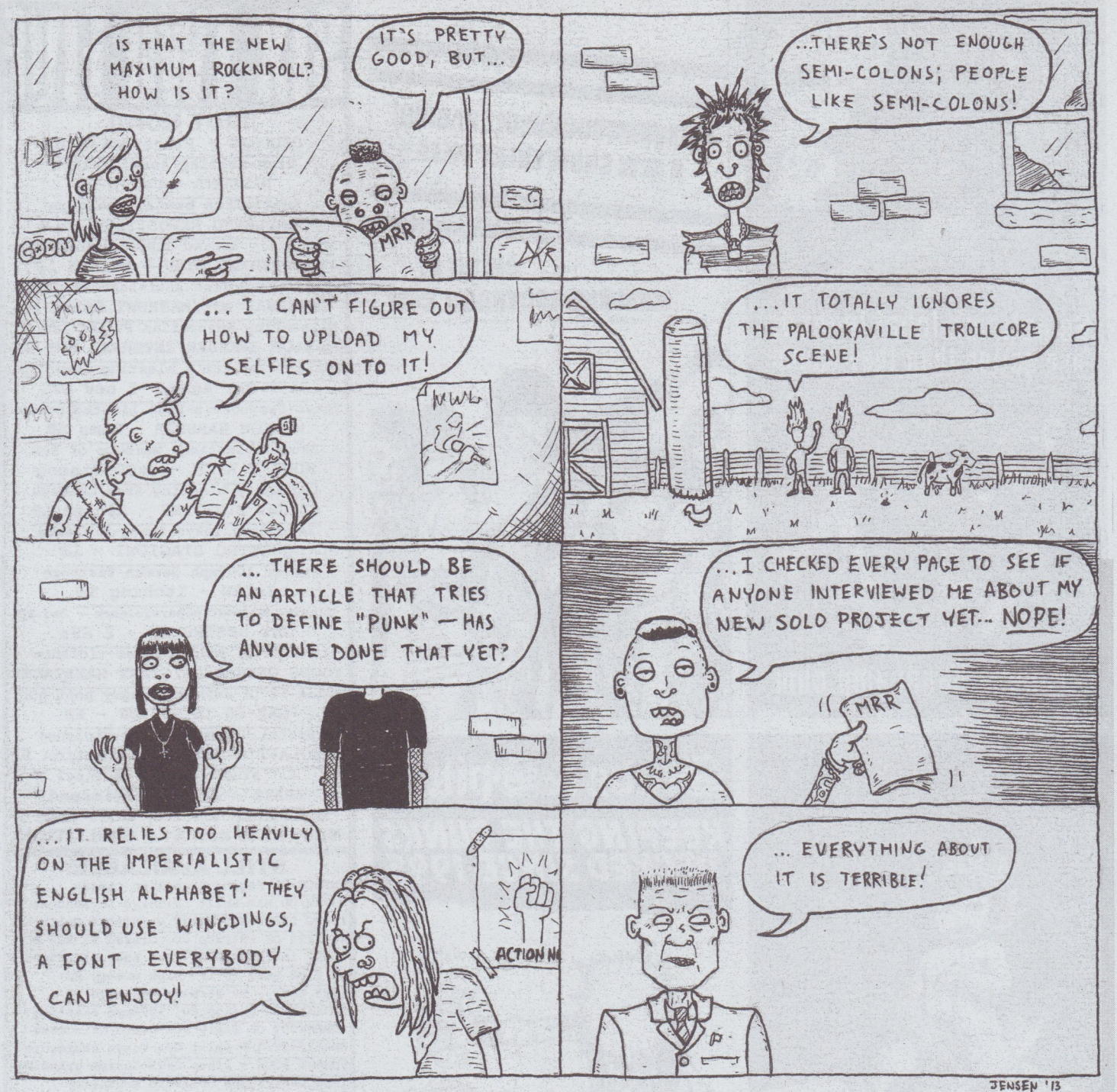

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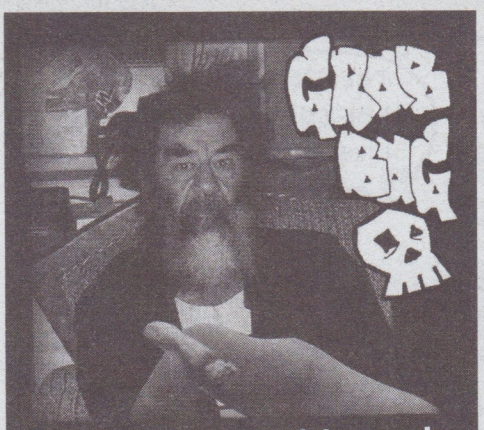

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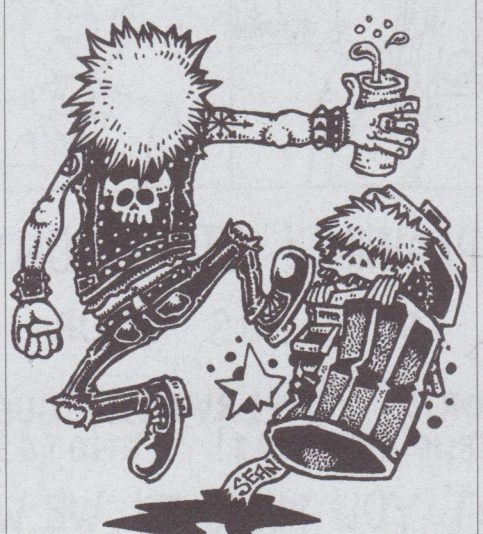

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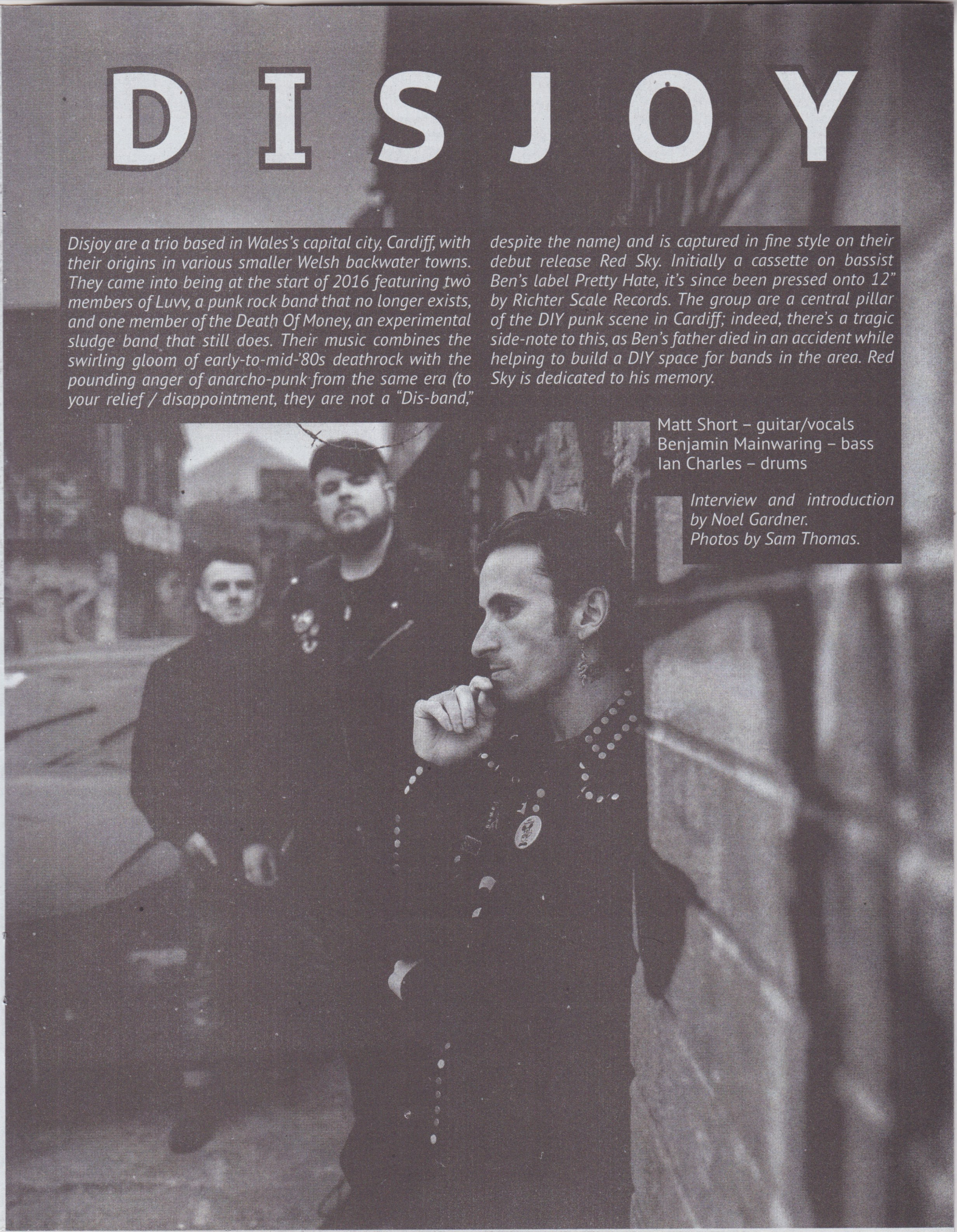
DISJOY

Disjoy are a trio based in Wales's capital city, Cardiff, with their origins in various smaller Welsh backwater towns. They came into being at the start of 2016 featuring two members of Luvv, a punk rock band that no longer exists, and one member of the Death Of Money, an experimental sludge band that still does. Their music combines the swirling gloom of early-to-mid-'80s deathrock with the pounding anger of anarcho-punk from the same era (to your relief / disappointment, they are not a "Dis-band," despite the name) and is captured in fine style on their debut release Red Sky. Initially a cassette on bassist Ben's label Pretty Hate, it's since been pressed onto 12" by Richter Scale Records. The group are a central pillar of the DIY punk scene in Cardiff; indeed, there's a tragic side-note to this, as Ben's father died in an accident while helping to build a DIY space for bands in the area. Red Sky is dedicated to his memory.



Matt Short – guitar/vocals
Benjamin Mainwaring – bass
Ian Charles – drums

Interview and introduction by Noel Gardner.
Photos by Sam Thomas.

MRR: It seemed like Luvv finished quite quietly, and Disjoy began afterwards quite quickly.
Matt Short: When we were in Luvv, that was with Sam Hunt and Rich Clarke, who were also in Chain Of Flowers. Around the time their album came out, Sam moved to London for a new job. They were just very busy.
Benjamin Mainwaring: Me and Shorty wanted to get out there and play shows and start something of our own. I do believe that Shorty asked Ian here if he'd be interested in joining at a house party.
Ian Charles: I wasn't doing much with my other band at the time. The singer moved away and that's pretty much been the death of the Death Of Money. And I wanted to play at a different speed.

MRR: Tempo aside, to me it sounds like you carry quite a lot of the drumming style over.
Ian: When Disjoy played with Melt-Banana, the biggest Death Of Money fan I know said that to me. It's still pretty simple, maybe a cheeky fill now and again.
Matt: That's the good thing about punk, simplicity's usually better. With Luvv, there was a lot going on there, a lot of guitars.
Ben: The vocals took a back seat but now they're more prominent.

MRR: Were the three songs on the demo bespoke Disjoy songs?
Matt: I wrote one of them, "Pressure," in Luvv. "Nightmare" was a brand new song. When I started this band, I was listening to a lot of industrial and noise type music and wanted to be as abrasive as possible.
Ben: I think we were still trying to find a sound on the demo. It's a stepping stone between Luvv and what we do now. But it's all a work in progress.

MRR: Did you have an initial description of what you wanted to sound like?
Matt: Not really... but as well as really abrasive punk I was listening to a lot of Christian Death and Bauhaus.
Ben: A couple of Dawn Of Humans tracks.
Matt: Anasazi as well. Ross, who's in Chain Of Flowers, came back from New York's Alright and played them to me. As soon as I heard it, I knew I wanted to do something like this.

MRR: Someone who was in Welsh anarcho- bands in the mid-'80s was talking to me just after you played with Italia 90, and was really amazed that a band like this exists in south Wales in 2018.
Ben: Yeah, we have got that from older... heads at certain shows. When we played with Wire.
Matt: The drummer from Wire said the same thing! We reminded him of all these old bands he played with. And Wire are a big influence on my guitar playing. The repetitiveness of it.
Ben: I was listening to *Pink Flag* a lot at the start of Disjoy as well. And then I found a first press in a record shop near us.

MRR: How did you find the experience of playing bigger shows with Wire and Melt-Banana, compared to the more regular DIY scene shows you do?
Matt: Well, I almost lost my fuckin' hearing playing with Melt-Banana, they were so loud.
Ben: In this band I prefer the intensity of smaller surroundings. The way it becomes almost claustrophobic.
Matt: It brings that element out in our songs. With things like Wire, there's the soundchecks we don't really need and sitting around getting anxious... but as a band, they've been making music for 40 years, still making music that's good, and they love playing as much as we do. As much as anyone from the DIY scene.

MRR: The flip side of the intimacy of the DIY scene is a situation where everyone knows everyone else, strangers don't really enter

into it, and it seems like nothing progresses.
Matt: There is that with Cardiff, except with recent shows, like Cuntroaches, I've seen lots of people come in who I've never seen before.
Ben: There's a core of around 50 or 60 people who support it. And we have had conversations recently about how we can expand that and get other people interested. I don't want what we do to be seen as elitist. When Disjoy started, I didn't know all those 60 people! But since then, they've become friends. It's also about being able to go to a different city, a different country, and find friends on that basis. We could go to Europe or New York and play, thanks to people we've met.

MRR: Who was it that called Matt's lyrics "Carmarthenshire propaganda" in Richter Scale's description of the record?
Ben: James Gallagher. A friend of ours.
Matt: I don't know what the fuck it means. I rarely think of Carmarthen as the town I'm from. It's a mad place. David R Edwards from Datblygu, he's from there. It's two and a half hours away from where we are now, but it's a different fuckin' world. The wild west of Wales. People walk around like they're cowboys. I haven't been back there for a long time, but if I walked around town for a bit, someone would call me a fag or a gayboy.
Ian: Anywhere in the outskirts of Wales... they'll chase you with pitchforks. When I started doing The Death Of Money, we'd just walk down the street in hoodies, and people would throw shit at us. We practiced in my parents' garage, and little kids threw rocks at the door.
Matt: That's what I love about punk and the scene we're in. I can go to, like, Static Shock Fest and wear a dog collar.

MRR: Would you be able to describe what your lyrics are about?
Matt: [*after some consideration*] I've never felt like part of anything; I've always felt like an oddball. Discontent at the society we've made for ourselves—the fact you have to get up every day to do a fuckin' job you don't want to do; the fact people expect you to get married and settle down—it makes me feel sick. Playing in Disjoy is the only time when I feel like myself, and if I didn't have this band, I'd be doing stupid shit. Which I still do anyway.
Ben: If you are blindly happy—and this is no disrespect to anyone who feels that way—then you're not looking at the world properly. And if you can change the way someone feels for a night—as cheesy as it sounds, that is what it's about.

MRR: Did any of you ever have ambitions to be professional musicians?
Ben: When I was a lot younger and first getting into music, I harbored ambitions. But seeing things differently, I want different things now. I feel fulfilled in the things I do in my life.
Ian: I've always looked at making music as a hobby, because the reality of trying to make money in a band is fucked.
Ben: Coming from where we're from, there's a few bands that we'd all know who have had a *career* in music, and it's not always as rosy as it seems.
Matt: I just appreciate the chance to go away and play shows. I'll play anywhere. Some of the people I work with always ask me, "what type of music do you play?" And when I tell them they say, "huh—we always assumed you were into heavy metal or black metal."
Ben: I wouldn't call it a hobby. To me it's something that's in me, something that's my life.
Matt: My grandmother's a published poet and a piano teacher who taught me piano when I was younger. And I absolutely fuckin' hated it, to the point where I didn't want to play music. I learned guitar late, and all I listened to was techno and hard house for ages—then as soon as I heard bands like Oasis I thought, "this is fuckin' class!" And then I got into punk. Like the Clash and stuff,

and then you trace it back, and that's how I got into hardcore.
Ben: Oasis are a real tip of the iceberg band. Some people are of the opinion you can't like certain bands, but there's always going to be a certain band, something that got you into it.
Ian: I was always into jungle because of my cousin. He played the *Jungle Mania* compilation to me when I was 12.

MRR: Oasis has crept back into punk as a permissible influence.
Ben: They touched a lot of people, especially in small working-class areas where we're from. In my opinion, the last British band that changed culture. That's not too big a thing to say.

MRR: Do you think it's a shame that a punk band couldn't have that kind of impact, at least not now?
Ben: The world isn't set up for that kind of music at this point. I think the Sex Pistols and the Clash were in the right place at the right time.

MRR: The channels are much more separated now. Either you're a band like yourselves who presses 300 copies of their record because realistically that's how many you're going to sell, or you're Ed Sheeran recording five different versions of his hit single for Spotify's global market.
Ian: If I had a major label, I would sign Disjoy and pay to put them on Radio 1 straight after Ed Sheeran.
Ben: For me, the cutting edge of music now is a lot of hip-hop and rap. Kendrick Lamar *is* on the radio! It can be done.

MRR: You recorded *Red Sky* in London during the Static Shock weekender two years ago, right?
Matt: We got there and we were like, "OK, let's not go crazy because we've got three days of recording the album." We were staying in a pub with a guy who kept playing Depeche Mode cassettes to us and we got absolutely hammered. Then we did the album in two days in between going to Static Shock, apart from Ben who went to Jurassic Park live at the Royal Albert Hall. I think you can hear our weekend in the energy of the recording, especially my vocals 'cause I was fucked. We got it mastered by Daniel Husayn at North London Bomb Factory.

MRR: Daniel masters so many records by bands from this scene, and they basically all sound amazing.
Matt: We got him recommended by Mark Jasper, who recorded *Red Sky*. He makes everything he touches sound hard as fuck. When we first got the recordings back, they sounded good but there was something missing. I've never had anything mastered before, so when we got it back from Daniel... it's just nuts the way it changes everything.
Ben: We didn't even talk to him about it, he just knew the bits to bring out. Adjusting the brightness and the contrast.
Matt: I always thought mastering was, like, hundreds of pounds per track. He charges fuck all. He's from a punk background. It's a big thing for me to be able to go with somebody who gets where we're coming from.

MRR: Whose idea was it to get Nicky Rat to do the artwork for the record?
Ben: I met him at a Chain Of Flowers show in London, when I used to drive them. I believe it was the night he met his girlfriend! I gave him a lift in the van somewhere, and love his work so eventually sent him a message. Anyone reading this should check his work.
Matt: We sent him the songs so he could get a feel for it and he just fuckin' nailed it.

MRR: How are you doing with writing new songs?
Matt: We wrote *Red Sky* and dedicated it to Ben's dad, who died in tragic circumstances, but kind of hammered it out; looking back, it would have been good to have more time. The stuff I'm writing now—I'm writing basslines as well as the guitar parts—is weirder and has more effects. One of the most exciting bands I've seen recently is Anxiety, and everything they did with the vocals in that. Bands like S.H.I.T. as well. The new songs are harder and heavier, although I don't necessarily want to go completely hardcore, but there are hardcore influences. I want it to be like a soundscape where you can get lost. We're trying to base all the new songs around this mental new pedal I just bought called the EarthQuaker. They hand-make them in Ohio, and you play one note through it and it sounds like fuckin' black magic.

MRR: Something I liked about *Red Sky* was the way the songs suggested a freedom to go in any number of different directions on the next release.
Matt: There's a common theme in all of them, and I think we found a sound that you know it's us when you hear it.
Ben: Yeah, I think we stumbled on something like that. I don't feel that *Red Sky* is the full representation of us, yet. I lost my father during the writing of it, and I think there's a few different emotions going on in it.
Matt: It seeped into it—you can hear. There's a certain coldness and space within the songs.
Ben: Shorty is the main songwriter, but it affected everyone. It happened during a key period in the band, and it happened when he was trying to help with creating a DIY space in Cardiff. So it wasn't something separate from the band, and it was very public, in the context of our scene. We played a show a couple of weeks after and I mentioned my dad before a certain song and people were applauding. So it felt like I was going through it in front of people. The title *Red Sky* comes from saying that my dad used to say all the time; the song of that name has a little nod to him lyrically but I don't think any songs are directly about him.

MRR: How would you say it's affected your approach to being creative—as in, just going out there and doing shit you want to do, while you can?
Ben: It changed me a lot, more than people realize it has. I've identified what I want to achieve in life as things have become clearer. My dad was very supportive of me playing music and always wanted me to put a record out, which I've done. If anything, we've surpassed my main goal as a band. It was a very proud moment to hold the record. But it's more in life as well: I honestly have no fear anymore. I used to be apprehensive of certain things, such as scared of flying, but the other day I flew back from Budapest and nothing about it bothered me. And it's all helped me identify the things I love, who I care about and who your friends are.

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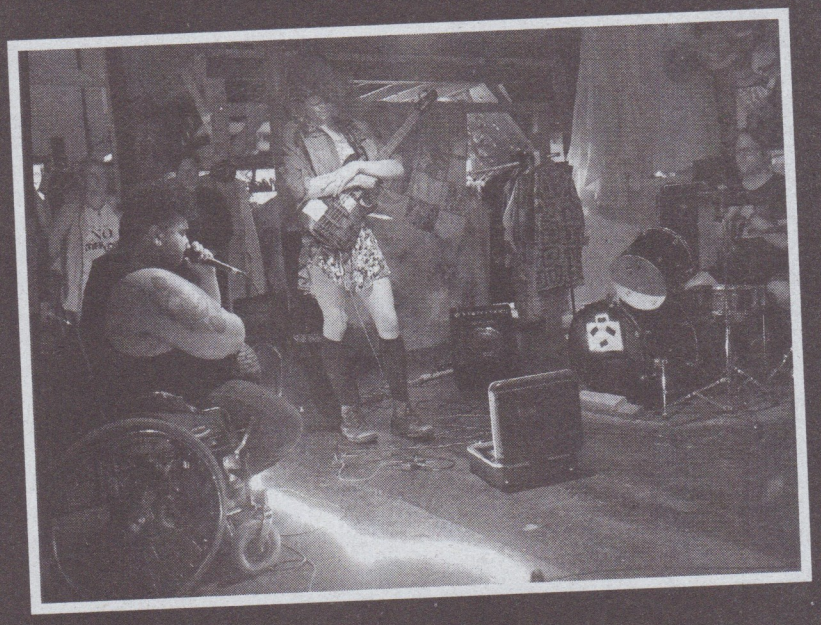
B/\GG/\GE

The constant pull between feeling jaded and completely over punk and its scene-y bullshit, in so many ways, yet so enlivened and pushed to do better by other aspects of it are something that I think and run my mouth about a lot. Desirability politics, hook-up and call-out culture, and who's disposable and why? Self-destruction versus self-preservation. There is so much more to punk than clinging to a particular aesthetic, genre worship, and whatever else cishet, able bodied white men have been yelling at me about since I discovered punk / hardcore at thirteen. B/\GG/\GE pushes punk forward in a way that I can only describe in the most cliché of ways, as a breath of fresh fucking air. There's so much to be said about who gets to take up space in punk bands, publications, and scenes in general. B/\GG/\GE, to me, is what punk is really all about, a celebration of nelly, gritty, resistance.



Introduction and interview by Samuel Fagaceae.
Photos by @gyihlts.ax

MRR: So, this is B/\GG/\GE!
Colin: Yeah! I'm Colin and I do vocals.
Natasha: I'm Natasha and I play bass.
Julius: I'm Julius and I'm the current drummer.
Colin: Nuh uh—the only drummer thus far.
Julius: The only drummer thus far.
Colin: For now.

MRR: We're over here in Olympia, Washington...
Colin: We're based in Olympia, Washington. We've been a band for three years. It kinda started off as a solo project doing roots music to queer punk, with me playing guitar badly, singing loudly, and playing drums well. And then I had an old bassist who's moved forward, and now we have Natasha. We were doing the covers thing, and then Julius came along and we were still doing covers for a year until we started working on original content. Boom. Back story.

MRR: Why here? Why now? Why this band?
Colin: Why here? Why *not*! Olympia has a really rich history of using music at the margins of the intersection of justice and shit like that, like reaching from riot grrl and everything that has came through Olympia queercore-wise since riot grrl has been really cool. And Olympia was the one place after, like, getting my ass reamed by Portland in so many ways (...literally and metaphorically) *[laughter]* that I can come and do the whole Olympia thing of working a shitty part-time job and living in a shitty punk house and, like, guilting white people into playing music for me. *[laughter]*
Julius: Is that where I came in?
Colin: No, you volunteered. *[laughter]* And like, why now? I just got tired of seeing able-bodied people taking up space in punk, and as somebody who grew up in the Midwest going to Christian hardcore and straight-edge shows—I said I had taste but I didn't say it was good taste, and I had nothing else to do on a Saturday night because I was like hella gay for God and celebrating the Sabbath as a Seventh-Day Adventist—I definitely grew up having to "earn my marks" in the mosh pit or whatever. And I just hit a point in my life where I was like fuck being a non-consensual vessel for white straight boys' rage in the mosh pit. I'm not saying that moshing is bad and doesn't have a space, *and* people need to be cognizant of whose bodies they're forcing to be vessels for white entitled boy anger. Olympia was the forum for me to do that, because people here are kind of afraid of really nelly faggot disabled brown people... That is, me... *[laughter]* Because I don't talk like they do, I don't use the same critique analysis of social justice as they do. So why here, why now? Because disabled people have had little-to-no representation in punk at all. Like, the only band I can think of right now that has another disabled person visibly in it is Dauðyflin from Iceland, which I guess is okay. They're okay. *[Colin does a sassy hand gesture, everyone laughs]* They're just another, like, all-white D-beat raw band! And I'm like, cool, you have another disabled person, that's awesome, and also, like, I will toss you in that pit if you come at me again. OHC 2017. And so it was kinda

that riot grrl notion around representation for me. Like, oh, there's no representation of disabled or chronically ill people in punk, I'll start a band myself. And it's imperative, because I grew up going to hardcore and punk shows (even though I wasn't necessarily punk) and disabled people need to see semblances of their histories being left behind. Whether they like the music or not, they need to know and see that people can fucking do it. I'd love to see a pit taken over by chronically ill people, physically disabled people, and people who have mental health shit just living their faggotiest, gayest lives and showing up for themselves and holding space for each other and keeping each other alive.

Julius: I think it's interesting you [Colin] start there because that's the theme of first original song, "Waves." That's where our content grew from. You know, the idea of having physically disabled folks in a pit and how they're not represented in punk, and not feeling welcome particularly in hardcore because the mosh pits are historically even more aggressive than in other genres of punk. That's what our first original song that we all wrote together was about, and that's what B/\GG/\GE grew out of, after our genesis. And that's right when Natasha started, too. What B/\GG/\GE is now has grown from that concept.

Colin: Yeah, when Natasha came we only had "Waves" written. And I initially wrote "Waves" as a call to other disabled people to come be in the pit with me, because they're worthy of taking up that space. Also, my / our art is not for white cis able-bodied dudes who are heterosexual. "Waves" is telling white able-bodied heterosexual dudes to fuck off.

Natasha: I actually remember we were talking about this a whole lot around the time the original bassist departure, and you were talking about how you were looking for another bassist and I was just like, you know me...

Colin: Yeah!

Natasha: And we had just talked about it on and off for a while in Obsidian, about how we wanted to collaborate, and I figured this was a really good opportunity for me to just try it out. Before B/\GG/\GE, the only other band that I was in was my improvisational black metal project, Bog Sirens, where me and my drummer, Miranda, would just jam our heads together and create some really fucked up sounding music in the realm of improvisation. So I was really interested in being part of a project that was more traditionally-written music because that's something I don't really have a lot of experience in. I've got solo projects and stuff, but I've never actually done it with a collective group of people before. I really jived with all the concepts behind B/\GG/\GE, and, you know, as a black transgender woman I also have issues with fitting in with certain punk spaces, sometimes in Olympia, sometimes not in Olympia... and my presence is just being that kinda rowdy queer trans girl shredding on the bass in our funky punky band. It's really satisfying to do. It's representing a wide swath of people who are all interested in this music and this scene but feel excluded for one reason or another, whether it be because you're disabled, whether you're trans, whether you're of color. It feels almost like it's my responsibility to be part of a band like this because it's putting in the work to make sure we're seen out here and we're able to show that we're worthy to be part of the scene as well.

Colin: I do too! When B/\GG/\GE was first performing, the majority of the shows that I was going to at the time in Olympia were all-white bands, or people who were white-passing POC folks. People weren't really organizing shows that were centered around the art of non-white passing QTPOCs at all unless I was organizing a show.

Natasha: Yeah, unless it was someone of color organizing the show, every time.

Colin: Yeah, it's been really cool that for the last year or two I keep seeing more non-white passing QTPOC bands coming to fruition in Olympia. It's been really cool to not be the only brown person that's not white-passing on a bill with another band from Olympia.

MRR: Speaking of lyrical content, what else would you like to say about your songs?

Colin: Something Julius touched on earlier today is how "Waves" was the genesis of us writing original content and getting comfortable as a band not doing covers. I wrote "Waves" after the Pure Disgust set at Olympia Hardcore Festival in 2016 . Basically what had been happening was that me and a buddy, Sam, from Chicago were at OHC, and at that point seven bands had gone on and they were the only person who was serving as a barrier between me and these ten or fifteen people moshing on me to the point that the wheels on my wheelchair were bowing. After one of their songs, the moshing people did what's called the "wall of death" or whatever and people just fucking lost their shit, and Sam had been doing a really good job of keeping people off of me until that point, but then simultaneously fifteen people like bum rushed me in my lap and my wheelchair went on the floor. People started cannon-balling on top of me and I started having a panic attack and freaking out. The only person who heard my screaming for help while I was freaking the fuck out was Sadie, who was standing in front of the speaker behind me. After the set, Sadie and Sam were like "are you fucking okay?" and I was having a panic attack and they were, like, holding me in the alleyway out back behind Obsidian. I was like, never again can I have this happen to another disabled person at show. I was so pissed off at white able-bodied people who are supporting a hardcore band that has brown people in it while also literally physically stomping me out of a space, because moshing to them, to Pure Disgust, was literally more important to them than my safety. I was like, "that's

fucked up and I'm never going to do that again and I'm going to go home and write a song about it and call it 'Waves,'" and that's exactly what I fucking did. People ask, "How do you compose your songs like that?" I just write lyrics and then go to Julius and Natasha, so all of our music comes from that, from their interpretation of my feeling words.

Julius: Yep, that's pretty much it I guess. Usually, Colin sends us lyrics when he writes them, and then we get to practice and we're like "what do you want this to sound like?" and he's basically just like "I want it to feel, like, angry but also sad." And then I'm just like... okay! And one of us starts playing and we kind of go from there.

Natasha: Yeah, then we try out a couple different things until we get a general picture of what the song sounds like. Then, usually after that, there are certain parts in every song where I'll just interject something which is always different every time we play it, which is kind of like my improv roots coming out a little bit and becoming a part of the band. And just making songs that connect really well and have a lot of energy in them... I feel like that's a very important part of what I'm focusing on when writing riffs.

MRR: You're a fuckin' riff queen, Natasha.

Colin: I think nothing is more fun for me when I'm on stage than the few times I open my eyes (because I get really scared) and see Julius doing the head bob thing he does when he's really feeling it, and Natasha just looking beautiful and majestic and backlit and her hair and she's just slaying. I feel like with Olympia any band that's not pop punk or D-beat hardcore really has to earn their place in the scene, because people here are pretty loyal to pop punk and hardcore. It's been cool seeing them [Julius and Natasha] have a lot of fun doing what we're doing and being present in the moment with me, winning over audiences in Olympia. It's weird seeing people coming to see our band specifically. It's really fucking weird. And it's really cool to see people going up to Natasha and Julius and be like, "oh my god you're so good, you're so talented, come on tour!" Everyone asks Julius to go on tour, and I'm like, "you're the worst person in our band to go on tour!" All the white dudes at all the shows will tell Julius, "let us know if you ever wanna go on tour." And I'm just like, why! This man has children, he ain't going on tour anytime soon.

Julius: I'm not going anywhere.

Colin: Natasha and I want to go on tour. We always want to not be in Olympia, always. It's just funny because at a lot of the shows I notice a lot of the white dudes in the other bands will only approach Julius about playing shows together in other towns, and he's the wrong person to be asking, bruh!

MRR: It's that weird thing of, like, "oh, he looks like us, let's talk to him," which ties into some of the shit you were talking about earlier.

Julius: It makes me really uncomfortable, because I've never set up a show for B/\GG/\GE, ever. Colin does that because Colin is the one in the know and

I just kind of hide in the back and sit down.

MRR: People go to some great lengths to do some white-on-white action. So, what else are your songs about?

Colin: Content-wise that I try to keep it equal parts grounding and fun. Like, "Poppin' Off"—ugh, this is gonna sound so...whatever, I'm just gonna embrace my Olympia roots here—is a spell to keep queer and trans people (specifically queer and trans people who are houseless) safe and alive. It's not as intense as "Waves," and definitely not as intense as "Trade." "Trade" is about how I used to fuck straight dudes for cash. It's also about how the only people who wanted to have sex with me or invest in any kind of relationship with me were straight married dudes who only wanted to bang behind closed doors in the dark. "Trade" is me calling all those people out. The lyrics "*240, straight, married man seeks same / with green eyes, just likes to cum on other guys / it's all right, just keep your lips tight / 'cause my wife doesn't know I'm here for the night*" is almost verbatim what so many Craigslist ads said to me (RIP Craigslist, fuck SESTA / FOSTA). I know so many queer and trans people who gets ads just like this every single fucking day of their lives and survive by doing this. I hit a point at like year 2 / 2.5 of living in Olympia where I was like "I've had a job for two years, I've had housing for two years... what would it be like for me to have a boyfriend? Or like date somebody?" Whereas, before, Julius's partner Anna had cross-stitched me a thing that is still hanging on my door that said "No sleepovers, no breakfast."

MRR: Yeah, what's that about? What's "No sleepovers, no breakfast"?

Colin: Well, I wrote "Trade" about the disposability of hookup culture, about how all of these gay and queer masculine folks were like, "oh, you're looking for husband material, so am I. Let's like, do a thing." And then I would just be left on read after hanging out once. Dating apps have been great because it allows you to find access and creates excess, but in my opinion they've severely altered the ways we develop relationships with each other. Because it's like, "oh, if you're not here to be a bull top for me when I want it and how I want it, then you're nothing to me." I'm so much more than that, and in my opinion every queer and trans person deserves way more than to be left on read. Or, more pointedly, deserves better than to go spend the night with someone and give him all these signals and when you leave never hearing from him ever again. We're worth

more than that and deserve better than that. That's what I wrote "Trade" about. Because after I stopped fucking married dudes for cash—because it didn't feel good—I didn't get laid by anybody in Olympia, ever, until January of this year. Holla.

MRR: Yeah, it's a tough crowd here, huh?
Colin: It is. I go to Seattle and people don't wanna fuck me in Seattle either, but I go to Portland and people just throw themselves at me all the time. So that dichotomy of living in Portland for 2.5 years—where people were throwing themselves at me—to *here* was weird.

MRR: What's so different about Olympia, culture-wise?
Colin: Do you like shitting where you eat? *[laughter]* And if you're a brown person trying to date another brown person in this town, it's even more like shitting where you eat. What they don't tell you about Olympia is you're signing up to date people with a lot of historical baggage and generational trauma. Hurt people hurt people and do fucked up shit to people and blah blah blah. It's really weird because when I first moved here and started liking somebody, and I'd tell people who had lived here for a while, people would be like "that person did this fucked up thing to my friend seven years ago" etc, which is all fine! Thank you for the warning! But also, damn, people are complex human beings and I'd hope that they'd learn from their shit. I would hope they are not making the same fucked up mistakes now that they were seven years ago. I'm not dating anybody because I'd rather be alone than have to go through all of this bullshit with everybody. Eventually it feels like I'm dating everybody in Olympia because they all have an opinion about who-the-fuck I'm dating.

MRR: Julius and Natasha, what about dating in Olympia for you?
Julius: I don't have very much experience with dating in Olympia! I'm pretty happy with my wife.
Colin: *[To Natasha]* Oh yeah, you're boo'd the fuck up too.
Natasha: I don't think I'd want to date in Olympia, anyways.

MRR: It's so hard.
Colin: People are children. Not actually children, but adults who aren't as emotionally developed.
Natasha: It's just a small city and everyone knows everyone. And, you know, being a transwoman in this society is complicated anyways, so I'm like... I'm good! Olympia is like a microcosm of things in the Pacific Northwest that are issues. People are flaky; people are down to a certain degree but they're not down with everything. You know that once you grill them enough you'll find, like, "oh, that's kind of racist," or "that's kind of transphobic," or "that's actually hella ableist," or all this other shit that people just don't wanna check. There are a lot of anarchists in this town and they'll do a lot of work, but they'll also refuse to critically analyze themselves or their own actions. They'll think about themselves but they won't think about the ways in which their actions influence the communities around them. I notice it a lot, and I'm not really interested in that.
Colin: Yeah, no, I could be chugging dick right now than doing that, and I'd be way less frustrated at the end of it. *[laughter]*
Natasha: Yeah, just go down to Oakland for a weekend. Hang out with all the cute trans girls.
Colin: That's what I do in Portland once a month. Prance around at dance parties and get dick. *[laughter]*
Natasha: Coincidentally, that's what a lot of the songs end up being about!
Colin: Like, here's another song about dick...
Natasha: Great! Should it sound like this or should it sound like this?

MRR: I love the band dynamic as friends first. Honesty is the best policy.
Colin: Well actually, Julius and I were coworkers first.

MRR: Tell me about that, because I know that your work influences the way you move in the world and the way you make music.
Colin: It definitely does, yeah. So much of this music is me processing my trauma from work.

MRR: Where do you and Julius work?
Colin: I'm a case manager for Community Youth Services in their Rosie's Place program, which is a drop-in center, young adult shelter, and houseless outreach program. Rosie's Place is a drop-in center for young adults—of ages 12 to 24 specifically—who need things like food, water, shelter, doing laundry, getting clothes, and getting important documents. It took me two years, but I worked my way up through on-call positions. I came into this job not having a college degree, and I was one of the first people they hired who didn't have a college degree for the positions I was applying for. Also, I came into this job having ten years experience providing direct services in other ways in Kansas City, MO, which is where I grew up. This job definitely influences my music. Like earlier I talked about how "Poppin' Off" was a protection spell specifically for my participants [in the program] who didn't have anywhere to go and who were going through some shit. Also, all of the shows we play are NOTAFLOF ("no one turned away for lack of funds") and they try to be all ages as much as possible. There have been a couple of shows where participants were there and it was kind of awkward.

MRR: You did great, though! At that one show at my house you were really good with your boundaries with that participant. It's just real. You've got to live your life, too.
Colin: Oh yeah. Whenever there's a participant at a show that I'm at, it's just a night where—if I'm drinking or smoking weed—I'm like, well, I guess they gotta know that mommy's got a life, too... as I awkwardly don't make eye contact with them and take a shot while smoking a spliff.
[laughter]

MRR: It's hard when you're someone's support person during a time of crisis to be human and be not at work.
Colin: Yeah, I think it's interesting for participants to see that side of me, because at work I'm like, "Stop saying sexual shit! Blah, blah, blah!" But then at shows...
Natasha: At shows, you have a band that's about chugging dick! *[laughter]*
Colin: Yeah! Participants have been, like, "He just said he used to suck dick for cash... *I* suck dick for cash, too!" And I'm like, yes, we clearly have some common ground here. Please do not talk to me about my past at work, ever. *[laughter]* For my participants who have seen B/\GG/\GE do shows, my relationships are a little bit different with

them. I feel like they're a lot more open with me about what they do in regards to working towards survival, especially with sex work and sex ed stuff, and that's really cool. I really like them a lot! They're also hellacious on my dating life. I always preface dates in Olympia by saying that downtown people are going to want to stop and talk to me, just keep going and I'll meet you where we're going in two or three minutes and it'll be fine. On this one date I was just casually walking by one of my participants who was frying really hard and was super drunk, and he was like, "Yo, Colin! Is that yo date?" And I was like, um, "what I do on my down time is my jam, bye." Also, it's interesting the dichotomy of my work: as a nelly brown faggot, I interact with males who've experienced trauma at the hands of gay or queer men in their life, and it's really weird because they're really comfortable with me. A lot of those folks have asked me to be their case manager, and I find that really weird because they're really homophobic. I was really finicky when I first got this job, and it's been interesting holding the dichotomy of loving people who've been hurt by other men in their community who have the same sexual orientation as I do, and having them care for me irrevocably and without reservation to the point that they're on acid and drunk and I'm going on a date and they're yelling at me, "Yo, Colin! It looks like your date's got a big dick!" I just looked at my date and was like, we're not gonna do this again, are we? And he was like, "Nah." *[laughter]*

MRR: Do you have anything else you'd like to say about lyrical content?

Colin: At the root of it all, it's me processing traumas and going through it: processing retraumatization through work, past trauma that I haven't necessarily told people about before, and the death of my mom, who died last year. One of the songs we're going to be working on after Julius leaves is the eulogy to my mom. I read a very condensed version of it at her funeral, which was at the church that I grew up in. I didn't really get to give her the eulogy that I wanted to give her, and I felt like the only way I could was by doing it through B/\GG/\GE. At the root of it, the lyrical content is balancing the heavy with the playful by processing things that are really traumatic but also doing songs that (hopefully) make people want to dance and take their clothes off and get sweaty in Olympia basements. Hashtag is someone cutting onions or is it armpits? Olympia's not really good at dancing. I see people nodding their head really hard and I'm like, dance! If I can do it, you can do it! I just want people to have fun and take their clothes off.

Julius: This interview is funny because I feel like I don't even know the lyrics to our songs.

Colin: That's because you never read them after I first tell them to you! Called out! What have you done to support brown people today, Julius? *[laughter and taunting]* Besides being in a band with me for three years. Can I get your ally card so I can give you a punch for that? Providing safe housing for *MRR* interview: two punches. If he gets twelve punches he gets to ask me one fucked up question about racism or ableism. *[laughter]* Anyway, going back, what makes this project in Olympia more special is that people in Olympia don't really know what to do with faggots. You [Natasha] and I are pretty bigs ones, I'd say... It's interesting because Olympia likes to exploit militant fag culture a lot. But then they get one or two people who are militantly faggots and they don't really know what to do. We talk about dick a lot, we cuss a lot, and we call each other cunts in a loving way. It's interesting being here and being like, oh, you say you're down for faggots or pretend you're down for faggots but you're not.

MRR: It's kind of wild that you're talking about how Olympia doesn't know what to do with faggots, because I know a critique I hear in a lot of queer communities is that cis fags take up a lot of space.

Colin: In Olympia, not at all. Also, for me, when I think of "faggot," especially now, it's a more expansive word. When I think of faggotry, it's not necessarily about cis gay dudes anymore. It's about anybody who's queer or trans identified who's not able to be anything other than what they are, which is loud and proud all fucking day every day irrevocably and without reservation, and who's never been able to pass as anything other that what they are. That's what faggot and fag culture means to me: providing spaces where people who could never pass as cis or heterosexual can come and find not only community with each other but also find sex for all the ways that sex can manifest for each other. Olympia just doesn't really do well with that. This is your call-in, Olympia. Your call-in with Colin, where we unpack our BAGGAGE.

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Also available from Natasha's label:
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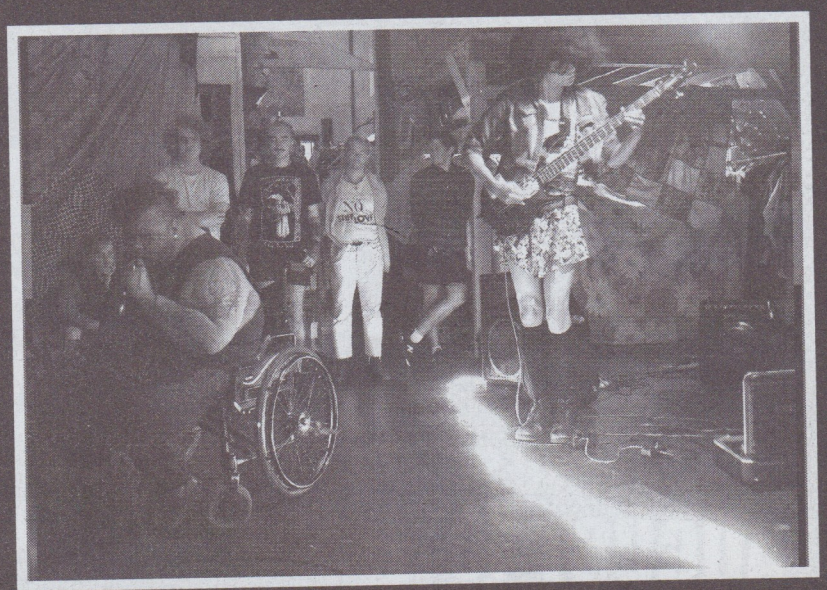

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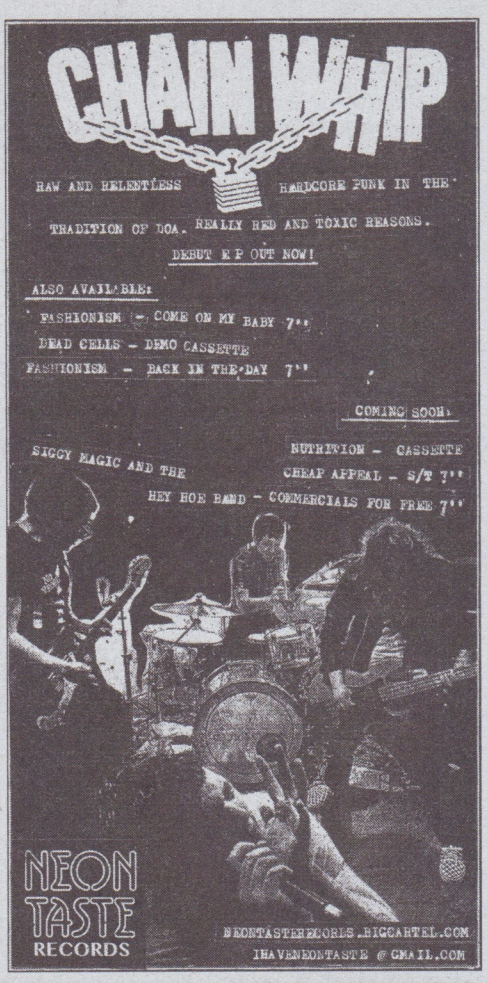
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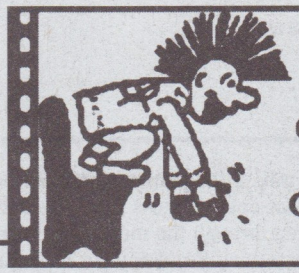

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

I had already wanted to see **Sorry To Bother You**, but the humorous (non)controversy started by former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown's two-sentence negative review of the movie gave everyone a good laugh and extra incentive to go see the film. For people unfamiliar with Brown, he is the epitome of the sleazy politician, giving favors to his rich friends and allowing corporations free reign over the city. Of course, he personally financially benefits from all of it too. The fact that he didn't get the movie just makes his cluelessness of how real people live more apparent.

Sorry To Bother You begins with Cassius Green at an interview for a telemarketing job at RegalView. Green presents an employee of the month plaque from his previous job along with a giant trophy as part of his credentials. The manager calls him on it, but admits he was going to hire him anyway. Plus he says the use of props shows initiative. After a shaky start, Green begins to excel at phone sales. The key to his success is using a "white" voice, as advised by an older African American coworker. The method works.

Green also gets involved in the movement to unionize the RegalView workers. However, on the day they go on strike, Green is promoted to power caller. He gets to move to an office on the top floor and is allowed use of the elevator. All of the other peons have to take the stairs to a less glamorous communal office. He is under pressure to make money. His uncle's house where he has been living is under threat of foreclosure. Before getting the job at RegalView, Green had not paid rent for months. His personal financial situation gives him the justification to break the picket line and betray his friends.

Sorry To Bother You goes for the big targets: corporations, the rich, workers' rights, race, loyalty, selling out. Fortunately, it does so in a humorous way. When Green finally gets the dirt on the WorryFree, the corporation he represents as one of the power callers, he is forced to endure humiliation on television in order to get the evidence shown. Insightfully, what should make any sane person be outraged by WorryFree's practices has the opposite effect on investors. WorryFree's stock goes up. It is these small details that make **Sorry To Bother You** so ridiculously astute.

Boots Riley of the Coup wrote and directed **Sorry To Bother You**. Although it seems like a perfect satire of our present day world, Riley wrote it ten years ago during the Obama administration. Still, the constant insanity of the Trump administration and the people who support it make this a great film for 2018. It may not offer any easy solutions, but it is obvious the working class needs to stop letting these corporations and the politicians that enable them divide us. (sorrytobotheryou.movie)

Over the opening credits of **Outcasts By Choice**, one of the members of the band states "I'd probably still be married to my first wife if it wasn't for the Outcasts." It struck as a really odd thing to say. There is no context or explanation for the comment, but somehow this first wife immediately gets thrown under the bus. The Outcasts came to his rescue from that lame life.

The Outcasts were a first wave punk band from Belfast, Ireland. They released their first record in 1978 and were managed by Good Vibrations Records' Terri Hooley. Dooley admits that he didn't get the band the first time he saw them, but he still ended up as their manager. As was typical of the time, they became a band without knowing how to play, but ended up learning and recording some catchy punk songs. They were raucous and brazen. They stormed the stage at an Elvis Costello show shouting "We're the Outcasts. Buy our single!" in an excellent DIY promotional stunt.

The police state situation in Belfast at the time with the barriers and checkpoints is an interesting backdrop for the development of a punk scene. Punks broke with the religious segregation of the time. The Outcasts had both Catholic and Protestant members. I would have been interested in hearing more of that angle.

Unfortunately for the Outcasts, these few bits do not really add up to an engrossing documentary. **Outcasts By Choice** is a little over an hour, but could still use some editing to tighten it up. There is little footage of the band back in the day. There is footage of their reunion show. So the remainder is filled with talking heads. The Outcasts made some good records. Maybe that should be enough. (loudfastloud.com)

Odpadki druge generacije is a look at how punk was reborn in Slovenia in the early '90s when Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia. The translated title is "Rejects of the Second Generation." This is the story of the second wave of Slovenian punk.

Most punk documentaries barely mention the 1990s. For **Odpadki druge generacije**, this is the starting point. This is the time of Nirvana and Green Day, when punk went mainstream. If the Slovenian punks know of these two bands, it is not apparent, nor is it mentioned. These punks are starting from scratch. One person mentions that he was too lazy to keep traveling to the next town to see bands, so they started inviting bands to play their town. Ingenuity and doing-it-yourself are the hallmarks of the Slovenian scene.

The punks of **Odpadki druge generacije** are inspirational. They are political and engaged. They work with the familiar ideas of punk in a fresh way. (odpadkipunkdok.si)

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Girls Like Me
By Nina Packebush
Bedazzled Ink Publishing Company, 2017
196 pgs | $14.95

Girls Like Me is the first Young Adult novel of its kind, combining the complex dynamic that exists between teen pregnancy and gender nonconforming identities. A 2018 In The Margins fiction award winner and 2018 Lambda YA Nominee, *Girls Like Me* is a groundbreaking, revolutionary book that takes on difficult subjects including suicide, self-harm, mental health, therapy, poverty, mental and emotional abuse, trauma, queerness, shame, breaking the cycle of dysfunctional parenting, and adoption. Author Nina Packebush writes with a genuine, full-of-truth voice of someone who's lived and survived a similar story, a queer teen mother herself writing about a pregnant queer teen.

A non-linear timeline full of flashbacks and deeply developed characters, through skillfully-written dialogue drive the plot. Sixteen-year-old Banjo wakes up in a juvenile mental ward after experiencing months-long emotional trauma as a result of her genderqueer partner's suicide. While in the hospital, she finds the first hint of solace from new friendships with two other teens: an adopted queer girl from Ethiopia who later comes out as a trans boy and a stuttering, gay Christian boy disowned by his born-again parents. And no solace at all from the clueless group therapist or the condescending, threatening psychiatrist with whom Banjo is forced to play nice. Once out of the hospital and back at home with her once-a-teen-mother-always-a-teen-mother mother, teen-single-parent sister, and nephew, Banjo is forced to face the fetus growing inside her, her self-harm behaviors, and to find closure with her partner's suicide.

Though Banjo is the protagonist of the story, it's her mother, Jane, who brings cohesion. Through real connection and acceptance, Jane undoes the myth of single parenting in isolation and exemplifies that there is no such thing as perfect parenting and that all families have flaws. Jane has been consumed by Banjo's sister's pregnancy and subsequent mental health crisis for such a long time that Banjo feels ignored when she, too needs mothering through her own crises. The way Jane is able to show back up for Banjo with unconditional, committed love before it is too late is a testament to the author's own lived experiences. Jane knows that the mental health professionals in the juvenile mental ward are dangerous, so she calls upon an ex-lover turned therapist to work with Banjo. Jane demonstrates absolute respect for Banjo's wishes around which type of prenatal care provider, a midwife, or an obstetrician, she uses. Banjo finds comfort with Dr. Alice, a lesbian OB who had also been a teen mother. And Jane never wavers in her support of whichever choice Banjo makes concerning her unborn fetus, adoption or parenting.

A real-life event worthy of note that happened outside the book's pages happened during the time of the book's release. According to Packebush, because of *Girls Like Me*, Target changed the way they list queer titles on their website. Originally, Target had censored the word queer in the book's synopsis. They'd replaced it with q***r. Packebush tweeted at Target that "Queer is not a dirty word. Stop censoring the word queer," and posted about Target's censorship on Facebook. People who saw the tweet and Facebook post wrote to Target, and within a week, Target responded to Nina Packebush directly, saying that they'd no longer be censoring the word!

With her debut book, Packebush, a long time zine-maker, fills a void with this life-saving story that doesn't gloss anything over. It is validating for those who have been through the mental health system, possessing healing power. It corrects misinformation out there that goes unquestioned by society. It's a shame eraser that helps un-marginalize a segment of society and had me openly crying several times throughout its twenty chapters.

For queer, pregnant teens, this book shows hope and compassion in action and explores edgy topics through a sensitive, not-sensationalized or graphic, middle grades and up lens. It provides a realistic example of one young person saving themself through friendship, therapy, growth, change, forgiveness, and a family's love—the incredible amount of love that runs throughout the entire book that ultimately pulls the story together at the end for the reader to be reassured of Banjo's resilience not to wind up another poor, dead statistic. And it's for everyone who is interested in moving beyond the patriarchal nuclear family as the only story. I hope *Girls Like Me* winds up in every public, school, and classroom library.

—Jessica Mills

TRI- X NOISE Photographs 1981–2016
by Bill Daniel
Radio Raheem Records, 2017
128 pages | $25.00

"Our memory has an industrial time stamp on it" —Bill Daniel (AKA Photo Bill)

In Bill Daniel's new photo book *TRI-X Noise*, each photograph flickers like an old black-and-white film and serves as a timeless document to subcultures bursting out of the margins of capitalist cookie-cutter USA. Using the same Tri-X film stock / camera / lens and hand held flash over the course of 35 years, Daniel's objective was to capture change over time in front of the camera while the apparatus remained the same. Daniel has a knack for being in the right place at the right time. These larger than life black-and-white images offer a glimpse into the early days of Texas punk rock, hardcore, skateboarding, hobo / freight-hopping culture, graffiti, communal living, underground art and filmmaking spanning three decades between 1981-2016.

Daniel's love of black-and-white photography sprang out of his time in college in Austin where he met his first artist mentor, Philip Trussell. Daniel tried to emulate Trussell's artwork in his early photography. His seminal photographs of early punk and hardcore legends the Big Boys, the Dicks, Butthole Surfers and Black Flag have appeared in various books, zines and exhibits over the years. *Tri-X Noise* finally brings these photographs together with his body of work that evolved out of his early punk touring days. Each portrait is densely layered with raw energy and emotion where one can experience the playfulness and intimacy of the unexpected subjects. Daniel only heavily documented punk shows for four years. As he moved on from photographing punk bands and scenes, he continued to maintain his punk / DIY ethos in his art-making process and representation.

TRI-X Noise is beautifully laid out, with the pages alternating between flooded grayscale and white paper. It has the quality of a flip-book. The book offers no narrative and Daniel intentionally puts the photo descriptions at the end of the book, giving the viewer a chance to see

each image as both documentation and art. What strikes me about these images is the way in which they flow together in a seamless motion of memories, each dovetailing into the next question or curiosity. Friendship and commitment to community are palpably felt throughout *Tri-X Noise*. They're exemplified in Daniel's portraits of his longtime friend and film mentor Craig Baldwin first appearing at work in his basement studio to a recent photo of Craig presenting *Other Cinema* at the Artists' Television Access in San Francisco.

On a recent visit to SF, with his book tour and a film screening of his short film, *Mission Bay*, about the rapidly changing landscape of Mission Bay from an industrial no-zone into a futuristic anywhere city of biotech research, Daniel and I talked about his impulse to create new work and share it widely with new audiences. Daniel built his own mobile photo installation for *TRI-X Noise* and is touring in a van from small town to city across the country sharing his work both on his mobile wall and as a slideshow, where he narrates the stories behind the images sometimes accompanied with live music by friends.

Daniel offers an excavation of American landscapes in post-industrial collapse in rust belt cities like Braddock, PA and codified scrawlings on walls and freight trains. In the ruins or the margins, he documents a glimpse of re-emerging wilds, a central theme in his work.

One of Daniel's major accomplishments as a filmmaker is the documentary, *Who is Bozo Texino?* Finished in 2005, it is a film Daniel spent fifteen years making. He fell in love with the hobo monikers found on freight trains and set out on an epic journey across the country riding freights and sleeping in hobo jungles to solve the mystery of who was behind the old moniker Bozo Texino.

Tri-X Noise is about liminal spaces and what we can make from them. It's about using all of the tools. It's also about creating your own culture despite the lack of institutional support or recognition. As we enter an age of increasing digital visual culture and commodification, how do we creatively preserve a sense of freedom and connection in our daily lives?

In *Tri-X-Noise*, Daniel reminds us to take the leap of faith into the unknown with courage and curiosity to imagine and create the worlds we want to live in.

—Ivy Jeanne

The Atheist in the Attic
By Samuel R. Delany
PM Press, 2018
111 pages | $14.00

The Atheist in the Attic is a fictionalized account of the first incendiary meeting of mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and philosopher Baruch Spinoza. A departure from the author's usual science fiction writing, this philosophical novella is a historical fiction piece. This printing also contains his famous 1998 essay "Racism and Science Fiction" and "Discourse in an Older Sense," an interview with Delany conducted by a fellow sci-fi author.

The novella takes place several years after the Rampjaar, Dutch for "disaster year," during which many died in battle or other events of civic upheaval. Two of the foremost advocates of rationalism (the belief that knowledge is best obtained through reason), Leibniz and Spinoza meet quietly on a winter day in the Netherlands to discuss ideas that could get them killed. Rationalists prioritize reason over emotion and religious doctrine as an approach to exploring the world, a heathen notion in 1676. Not an atheist in the literal sense, Spinoza's motto is *Deus sive Natura*—God, or in other words, nature. He views thoughts and the material world as separate yet complementary planes of existence. Leibniz, who provides the novella's diary-style, first-person narration, listens in captivated horror as Spinoza describes the public murder of a pair of brothers. Mutilated and killed for speaking against war, the brothers were partially eaten by rioters. Spinoza recounts his pain and frustration at being unable to condemn the violence for risk of losing his own life. Social repression is a theme throughout the book; Leibniz calls philosophy an endless conversation through which one moves closer to the truth, and when discourse is forbidden, how can society progress?

Not immune to the trappings of prejudice, Leibniz others Spinoza by repeatedly referring to him as "the Jew." Spinoza does not identify as Jewish and has been disavowed by his former Jewish community—marginalized by the marginalized—yet Leibniz sees his peer's heritage as his primary identifier. The theme of otherness carries into "Racism and Science Fiction," in which Delany tells of the peculiarity of being classified by his race—he is widely considered the first African American sci-fi writer—rather than by the content of his work. Delany is often grouped with other Black sci-fi authors like Octavia Butler, which strikes him as strange, because their work falls under different subgenres of sci-fi. A famous editor once rejected one of his manuscripts solely because the protagonist was Black and he did not feel readers would relate. Sci-fi legend Isaac Asimov offhandedly joked that Delany's literary awards were given to him because of his race. Delany believes Asimov was trying to inject humor into an uncomfortable situation but holds the remark as a reminder that his work and actions will always be viewed by others in the context of his race.

Social mobility, the movement through social hierarchies, is another theme in the novella. Leibniz is a theoretical advocate of transcending class boundaries. He advises a friend and employer to promote a clever house servant named Peytor, buts finds himself startled to learn that Peytor has already been promoted from outside servant in spite of his limp. The servant's ambition perturbs Leibniz in spite of his relatively progressive beliefs. Peytor asks for an hour alone with Leibniz's *perruque*, his powdered wig, a clear fetishization of the class symbol. Leibniz thinks of the murdered brothers and begins to fear Peytor, wondering if the servant would cannibalize him given the chance. He thinks about how masters are strict with their servants out of fear of an uprising at the slightest display lenience. For the same reason, Spinoza could be persecuted for sharing his ideas. Suppression is the method through which the powerful enforce their reign. Removing his powdered wig, Spinoza considers the instability of his position in society and fragility of power. With a masterful ability to weave social messages with history, Delany successfully branches away from his usual genre in this short but rich book.

—Caitlin Xavier

Diario De Oaxaca:
A Sketchbook Journal Of Two Years In Mexico
by Peter Kuper
PM Press, 2017
240 pages | $24.95

In the summer of 2006, Peter Kuper, fed up and fearful of the Bush regime and tired of America and its consumer culture, decided to continue a family tradition of a sabbatical abroad like his father before him had done. Only, instead of Israel in 1969, he chose to take his wife and daughter to Oaxaca. Landing literally the day after a suspected fraudulent election turned the annual teachers' strike into a bloodbath, killing more than twenty people, including the American reporter Brad Will and seriously affecting the livelihood of every citizen of this tourism dependent city in one of the poorest states in Mexico.

As a co-founder of *World War Three, Illustrated*, and the artist behind *Mad Magazine*'s *Spy vs. Spy* since 1997, Kuper felt he had no other choice than to put his talents to use, making sketches and paintings of the struggles he felt were inaccurately portrayed in American news outlets and sending his own illustrated reports through vibrant emails to colleagues. Here in Oaxaca, we see stunning interpretations of protest: crashed, overturned, and burned busses; hundreds of Federal riot cops

BOOKS

on cell phones alongside street musicians; mothers and children selling crafts; and empty, blood-stained cobblestone streets. Six months later after the strike is over, the deaths have been counted, and the protesters remain in jail, Kuper continues his sketch journal chronicling not just the crackdown in Zocalo Square and the politics involved, but also daily life and an attempt to return to normalcy. Kuper includes diverse plant and insect life, luchadores, harvest festivals, beach scenes, the return of tourists, his visits to ancient ruins, Chiapas, and Mexico City, and the triumphant return of radical political graffiti calling for the ouster of Governor Ortiz, which had been violently removed during the struggle. Most memorable was a mind-blowing account of his visit to a legendary, almost mythical remote forest in the mountains of Michoacan, where literally millions of Monarch butterflies travel for over two thousand miles every year to mate.

Kuper's fascination with insects is beyond just cool. It's obvious that his childhood dreams of becoming an entomologist were never fully crushed as depictions of scorpions, ants, crawling worms of every length, beetles, roaches, spiders, moths, and wasps adorn nearly every page.

This is not to be confused with a graphic novel in the least. Fans of Peter Kuper may recall striking similarities and outright identical stories in his slightly fictionalized 2015 graphic novel, *Ruins*, but *Oaxaca* is the raw daily illustrated diary, jumping between chapters upon chapters of beautiful scenes and pages of details and thoughts, blending together well, but never really 100% in need of each other.

—Ryan Modee

Like a Dog
by Tara Jepsen
City Lights & Sister Spit, 2017
146 pgs | $15.95

The (anti) heroine of *Like a Dog* is Paloma, an instantly likeable 30-something teenager who just wants to drink Mad Dog, skate, and wallow in ambiguous sexual tension with her best friend, Irma. She's a tomboy who wears her heart on her sleeve and doesn't have many ambitions beyond helping her newly rehabilitated brother sell weed while practicing stand-up comedy on the side. Jepsen's breakneck style comes directly from the school of Bay Area queer punk writing that includes Michelle Tea (a close friend of Jepsen's), Lynn Breedlove, Rhiannon Argo, and Katie Noyes. Which is to say: this is heavily trodden territory, and it really takes someone special to wring fresh prose out of such literary cliches as "Gay San Francisco" and "aimless young people." But Jepsen deftly manages it, instantly transporting us to a world of slackers and folks still managing to live under the techie hell radar. Throughout, Paloma sprinkles sharp observations and one-liners such as, "Dear Gay Goddess, please bless me with the relationship to my gender that any female dog enjoys. They are just like 'pet me,' and then, 'I'm pregnant.'" Humor is by far Paloma's favorite coping mechanism, one she uses as armor against anything that makes her uncomfortable. The second things get too dark, intense, or close to home for her, she's ready with a barb to let off some of the pressure.

A sense of humor is crucial, because we soon learn this is a mainly story about Paloma's fraught relationship with her brother, Peter. The two are very close, but it's exactly that closeness that allows them to hurt each other so deeply. Or as she notes at one point, "two teenage dudes swing fists at each other half-jokingly, just outside the skatepark fence and I'm not telling you that because it's a metaphor for me and my brother, it's just what I see." On the one hand, Paloma has a lot more respect and patience for Peter than the rest of their family. She knows that Peter's addictions are related to trauma from child sexual abuse, and desperately wants for him to heal. On the other hand, he constantly tests her love, manipulating and pushing her to the limit. Jepsen does a great job of capturing the tension between siblings, "[Peter's] such a weird mess, and under all the chaos he's created I see his soft face, like when we were little, worried and searching," Paloma explains at one point while she holds Peter, only to admit a little later that she is "burned out on the whole relationship." As Peter falls deeper into addiction, Paloma seems to disassociate, distancing herself from his life and relying on black humor to navigate a tangle of emotions. Anyone who has watched a loved one struggle with addiction will recognize the mixture of unconditional love coupled with frustration and anger, the fear of enabling and the painful knowledge that love is often not enough to save someone. Moments like these always feel raw, almost bloody in Jepsen's writing because they're pulled from real life. Hers are hard-won lessons that don't end neatly or happily like we might want them to; this is a novel of gaping holes, things left unsaid.

Above all, *Like a Dog* is a story about surviving by finding humor in the pain of human existence, and about the lasting marks we leave on each other whether we mean to or not.

—Arielle Burgdorf

HEY PUNK!

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(KK) Kenny Kaos
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(MF) Miranda Fisher
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(PA) Pete Avery
(P$) Paul Argent
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RS) Ramy Silyan
(WN) Robert Collins

ABOLITIONIST – "The Instant" LP

This Oregon political hardcore band is back with another tale of dystopia. Their records are known for having a storyline connecting the songs, a strong example of the extra care these punkers put into their work. ABOLITIONIST make themselves stick out from the field of political punk rock with their decidedly clean vocals, dedication to diction, and meticulously planned albums, all while not sacrificing an ounce of the punk ethos. This is well-read punk à la PROPAGANDHI. Check out "The Movement" or "Backlash" for a sampler of the band's skill and "shit's fucked" attitude. (RH)
(1859)

ADICTOX – "-2-" LP

Cuba's ADICTOX plays melodic punk that is upbeat and anthemic. Some of the poppier songs seem comparable to '90s-era Fat Wreck Chords while other songs seem to be in the vein of RIP, LA POLLA RECORDS or 2 MINUTOS. Many of the songs maintain a very mid-tempo rhythm, epic leads, and choruses full of gang vocals. Upbeat, melodic, rockin' punk. (BP)
(The Grizzlar)

A HANGING / WOORMS – split EP

A HANGING blaze forth out of New Orleans with ripping hardcore with a few sludgy metal breakdowns that are abbreviated by gruesome vocals and thrash prowess. High production went into this slaying, extremely well rehearsed, three song offering. WOORMS rear their ugly heads through Baton Rouge grave soil with a melancholy sliding string Southern intro. Sounds like the image of vultures circling and music that anthems in with deranged grunge-esque mathematic depressive blues rock. Intriguingly hypnotic and repetitive. Taking no haste, the side rounds out a complementing esoteric split and ends abruptly. Kudos. (JR)
(Paranoize)

APOCALYPSE TRIBE / DEATH MARCH – split EP

This split has a very mid-'90s feel to it, from the very straightforward b&w graphic presentation to the music it offers. APOCALYPSE TRIBE have a bit of a FINAL CONFLICT vibe, though their tunes are more straightforward and melodic. The clear, well-articulated vocals are a highlight (especially necessary because the record does not have any kind of lyric insert). DEATH MARCH are more my style, furious '90s US-style crust complete with a STATE OF FEAR cover. Easy to imagine this band sharing a stage or a split with a band like DEFORMED CONSCIENCE or WARPATH. To be honest, the entire record feels a bit basic and slapdash (the DEATH MARCH songs appear in a different order on the record than they do on the sleeve for example) but it's not actively bad, just a bit uninspired. (AU)
(Indecision)

ARRYAM / STRUGGLE SESSION – split EP

An excellent sampling of some lightning fast hardcore from across the Pacific. Korea's ARRYAM Lays down some relentless fastcore in the vein of FUCK ON THE BEACH. These guys like FUCK ON THE BEACH so much that they even throw in the FUCK ON THE BEACH theme song at the end of their side real quick. Not bad, but the real shredders here are China's STRUGGLE SESSION! They rip out some non-stop, hard-hitting fastcore that remembers that early CRO MAGS and AGNOSTIC FRONT are their roots. And, with lyrics like *"It's OK to punch a Nazi / Fuck the POTUS,"* can you really go wrong? Do yourself a favor and find this record! (BA)
(Genjing / MYDY)

AUS – LP

I'm pretty floored by the authentic vintageness AUS has captured (down to the b&w band photograph included, which comes housed in a post-stamped wax paper envelope, quite unlike anything I've seen). If XMAL DEUTSCHLAND resonates with you, there's no way you won't like this, and this is the most accurate portrayal of that style I think I've ever heard. The keyboard tone is straight from *Tocsin*. Tense post-punk, bass and guitar tones like icicles, through which depressive tunes reflect in a sinister key. A glistening monotony interspersed with memorable refrains, which I'm avoiding calling hooks because that feels like a "pop" term, and this is anti-pop. "Kein Licht" gets closest to melodic but brilliantly manages to stay underworldly. Multiple German friends sent me links to this once it was available to stream, and for good reason because this is an exceptional release. (MA)
(Static Age)

BACK TO BASICS – "Shaded Eyes" EP

This Japanese band gives us two seriously amazing songs on this little piece of wax. Ever wish EXPLODING HEARTS had played faster? Or

wondered what it would have sounded like if early REPLACEMENTS got really into TEENGENERATE? Ex-members of FIRST ALERT. Don't know if all their songs sound like this, but these two are great. Track 'em down. (FS)
(Secret Mission)

BAD SONS – "Cry Tough" EP

Chicago-based, leather-jacketed street punk. It's the kind of fun stuff where you know they're all head-bopping in unison while playing but not in a choreographed way. It sounds like there is some good stage synchronicity going on here. It's nice when you can hear it. There is a lot of tight vocal play between the at least three people chiming in on vocals. You're not getting a lot of innovation here, but they're doing a lot of the same old things well. (RH)
(self-released)

BARB'S CHILD – LP

This really strikes me as something that would have been desperately consumed by fanboys in the BLANK DOGS era of bedroom internet music mysteries. It has that private dark lo-fi scraped out glam / punk wave mystique where it sort of sounds like someone may have made it in 1979, or five years ago or last week...If you like the bands that ENO produced in the 1970s (the first two ULTRAVOX LPs?!) but are currently really taken by JOHN MAUS at the same time desperately nostalgic for the TermBro days of yore mentioned above, then I feel like this music is worth your time! It's got a slight garage turn to it too, if that makes it sound more yours. (LG)
(Glued to the Genre)

THE BELLICOSE MINDS – "Incision / Fuel the Flames"

Portland's darkwave heavy hitters BELLICOSE MINDS have been at it since 2008. They stay true to their roots with this release. If anything, the two tracks dive deeper into the genre with high production value and an increasingly retro '80s deathrock feel reminiscent of SIOUXIE AND THE BANSHEES or CHRISTIAN DEATH. The track "Incision" indulges in some jangly guitar work and melodic new wave hooks. Both tracks are extremely precise with dreamy, layered elements, haunting vocals, and irresistible dance beats. Definitely something to check out for fans of darkwave, deathrock, and new wave. The BELLICOSE MINDS continue to progress and develop their sound rather than burn out or rest on laurels. Ten years in and this is their best release yet. (HB)
(Black Water)

BINGE DRINKER – "Street Cans" LP

Clean slow riffs start this LP off with a modern-era DARKTHRONE style and production and the doomed essence of 13. Loving the rapid Cro-Magnon breakout that you don't wait too long for, à la POSSESSED's *Seven Churches*. I found that some of the thrash metal passages got a little repetitive, but the deadlier clobbering pace grooves were cold and mean, heavily recalling VOETSEK. Simply metered vocals, which are totally comprehendible, the vitriol spitting sneers of a witch from the '80s L.A. hardcore scene. Gravelly bass and punctuated snare really harken a '90s NAPALM DEATH sound when death, grind and punk were all over each other. Very good outing. (JR)
(Extreme Ultimate)

BLACK PANTIES – "Dirt From The Mop / Dreams Of My Teeth"

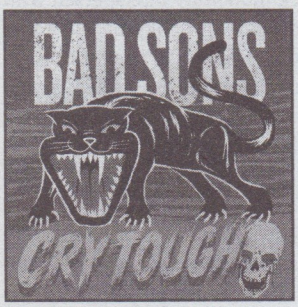
The (ahem) gusto of B. Pan & The Tees seems triply-powerful this go-around, as "Dirt From The Mop" is a bile odyssey that requires industrial disinfectant. Really, chums: the severity of each successive verse, each new dynamic twinge, feels and sounds epic. Those aspirations meet molar-grind in "Dreams Of My Teeth," a tune with a familiar trash propulsion that will ensure the foaming of the faithful. Come for B-side, die for the A-side. Grueling and great. (MC)
(Total Punk)

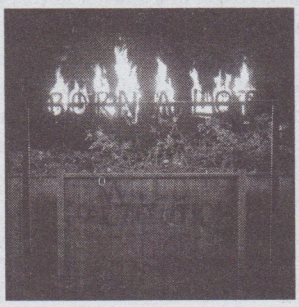
BORN A LOT – "Wild Constitution" LP

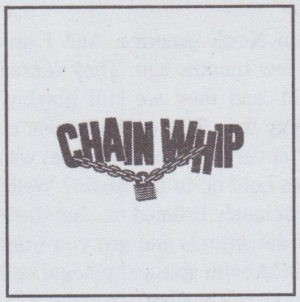
It seems like the late '90s / early '00s are making a bit of a comeback these days. BORN A LOT (wish I knew the story behind that strange name...) sound very much like a band I would've seen open for PG. 99 or BOTCH back in the day. Not quite as chaotic as the emo-violence of the day, but equal parts heavy and emotional with some pretty nifty riffing thrown in. There are some blasting parts that very much recall SUICIDE NATION alongside more squall-y, tempo-changey parts that are very CAVE IN. The strange graphic approach doesn't do the record anything when it comes to curb appeal, but beneath that bland surface lurks some truly vicious emo-influenced hardcore, especially the B-side opening "Water Treatment," which is a certified banger with a monster moshy breakdown. Coming into the record blind and with very low expectations given the unassuming art, the quality of this record was an extremely welcome surprise. (AU)
(Nadine)

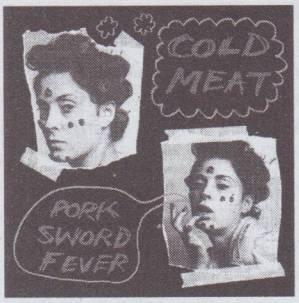
CASUAL BURN – "Tomorrow Problem" EP

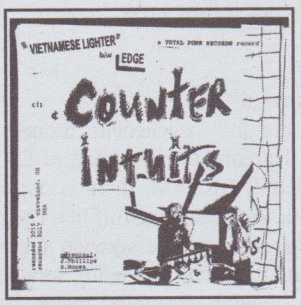
Which do you want first, good news or bad news? Well, fuck, here's the good news: CASUAL BURN was (with apologies to MIDNITE SNAXXX and KID CONGO) my absolute favorite band of Gonerfest 13. I saw at least a dozen bands that one sweaty Saturday, and no one else came close to the precocious, languid chaos of CASUAL BURN. Nutso guitar, caveman beats, and bonkers wailing, CASUAL BURN stuck there like dried vomit and chewed bubblegum. I loved it. Miraculously channelling the swamp gas feelings of the CRAMPS without sounding anything like that at all, CASUAL BURN made me giddy and annoyed, a perfect combination of shitty emotions. And, on top of all that, their *Talk Bad* tape ruled. Now, damn it, the bad news: this record is not very good. It's a digital-sounding shit-fi recording, which is fine, even commendable, but the whole point of that aesthetic, to me anyway, is crudity and wildness, and *Tomorrow Problem* is cruelly lacking in both. Without any immediacy, the whole thing just sounds flat and tired, like, exhausted. Everyone on it sounds exhausted. The lyrics are good, and the songs might be good ("Channel 52" certainly is), but the record doesn't hit. (MR)
(Slugsalt)











CHAIN WHIP – "Self Destruct" EP

Hard swinging garage hardcore with almost enough teeth to justify their moniker. Late '70s attitude with an early Midwest snarl. Listen to the gruff winge *"why couldn't I have been born rich?"* and you know you're in the right place—this one is pure bang. (WN)
(Dirt Cult / Neon Taste)

CHARACTER ACTOR – "Out of Hands" EP

One of the most boring records to look at all month; one of the coolest records to listen to all month. Insanely catchy pop punk. Apparently a side project with members of the ERGS and NIGHT BIRDS. Mentioning their old bands gives pretty accurate insight into what to expect out of this four-song record. These songs are original but exactly what you'd expect. Smartly crafted pop songs that will rattle around your head for days. #chrismasonfanclub. (FS)
(Dirt Cult)

CITRIC DUMMIES – "The Kids Are Alt-Right" LP

Herky jerky poppy noise rock'n'roll from Minneapolis. I can't say it fully fires on all pistons, but it's wild and weird enough that it holds up. Sorta like a third rate SCHLONG (hey, that's still a fucking compliment!), without all the mind-boggling signature changes, and with lyrics that would have been better left unwritten. Pretty seriously goofy stuff. A five page booklet explaining the songs (which seems to have been written exclusively for this zine) says this entire output was learned and recorded within two weeks. I believe it. The artwork is sincerely superb. (DZ)
(Erste Theke Tonträger)

COLD LEATHER – "Smart Moves" LP

Goddamn, this band is great. After a wonderful demo and EP, COLD LEATHER delivers again! Hailing from Berlin, Germany, COLD LEATHER plays dark, melodic punk that is fucking catchy. Upon initial comparisons, bands like NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS and GORILLA ANGREB come to mind. *Smart Moves* really showcases COLD LEATHER's growth as a band. As before, the songs are balanced wonderfully between somber melodies and danceable rhythms. This time around, songs like "Stunned" slow things down a little bit, and at moments, some of the guitar work even feels reminiscent of GUN CLUB. The whole damn record has great hooks and melodies interwoven throughout it. Highly recommended! (BP)
(Adagio830)

COLD MEAT – "Pork Sword Fever" EP

Perth, Australia's COLD MEAT deliver a defiant screed against partriarchy, fatphobia, and a hell of a lot more. Featuring scrappy guitars and fucking fierce vocals, the five tunes here are absolutely essential, a perfect expression of the rage that punk should aim for. (JD)
(Helta Skelta / Static Shock)

COUNTER INTUITS – "Vietnamese Lighter / Edge"

It's great to prioritize getting young people into punk, but it's also crucial to emphasize *staying in punk* as people grow up, get jobs, have kids, and generally get on with their lives. Because that's how we end up with individuals like the true American hero Ron House (THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS, GREAT PLAINS, etc.), who now, in his 60s, is neither resting on his laurels (he's been churning out great music since before most of us were born) nor "retired" from music. Instead, he's fronting one of the most exciting and important punk bands in the world. House's partnership with Jared Phillips (TIMES NEW VIKING) in COUNTER INTUITS has been perhaps the greatest musical accomplishment of either's career, which is really saying something. And this single is as good as anything the band has ever done. I hope we live in a world where the announcement of a new COUNTER INTUITS record has already sent readers of this magazine shoving each other out of the way to be the first to obtain it, but if not, there's no time like the present. Hard for me to imagine a better single coming out this year. (MF)
(Total Punk)

CURSE / STREET SECTS – split EP

Let's start with STREET SECTS. They blast out harsh industrial noise that feels more machine-oriented than organic, reminding me of something between BIG BLACK and early MINISTRY. The vocals float between sung and screamed while painting a picture of alienation and despair. CURSE also plays electronic music, although their approach is darker and more in line with goth and dance music. Their lyrics touch on the idea that DIY's use of social media has made us lax about security culture (no argument there) and made it more open to outsiders, which I disagree with. Punk was *started* by outsiders, and while this is an imperfect and sometimes unsafe space, it has always been a space for those who don't feel at home in "normal" society, for whatever that's worth. I like that both of these bands are pushing in a different direction in the spirit of DIY music, but I also can't say that I'm super excited by it. (GH)
(Realicide)

DAMAGERS – "Again And Again" EP

Fast-paced melodic punk with really no breaks at all. DAMAGERS really emphasize that *one-two-one-two* drum beat that we are all enamored with, which is not a bad thing at all. They do a really awesome job at keeping 7" interesting by creating a new atmosphere for each song while still retaining their identity. This never strays away from what feels like its main purpose is: to get people to move their asses, and they really drive that point home on side B with the tracks "Indignation" and "Parasites." Solid ass punk. For fans of LOS MONJO and EXIT ORDER. (RS)
(Deranged)

DAUÐYFLIN – "Aldauði" EP

Icelandic devotees to the pogo beat DAUÐYFLIN remain as violent as ever here. Six tracks of fucking pounding, noisy, fucked-up punk backed up with a bass that has a post-punk tone. The soundtrack to pogoing onto a stake and continuing to further impale yourself as you ceaselessly pogo. The even more ludicrous and chaotic version of punk

darlings XYLITOL. I died listening to this record. (JD)
(Iron Lung)

DEADSMOKE – "Forest of the Damned" EP

DEADSMOKE of Italy play progressive psychedelic drone-pop metal. I mean that as a compliment. Thinking the best parts of CAN, GOBLIN, CLUSTER, and TANGERINE DREAM, there is nothing depressing about this. Fucking fantastic kick beat takes off into cosmic landscapes with insectoid effects flickering in the background. Guitars fuzz and the bass verges on blown out crumbling. Not really sure why they are described as doom; this is hopeful interstellar metal. Way into this prog / krautrock instrumental behemoth with minimal vocal undertones. (JR)
(Let It Bleed)

DEMERIT – "Out Of The Fog" LP

China's anthemic street punk legends are back again, and this time they sound like they've dropped an actual opus. I fully admit that their brand of punk is not typically my go-to, but as soon as the bomb goes off and "Do You Smell It?" drops I'm fuckin' hooked. Relentless double kick driving an early MOTÖRHEAD pace, effortless leads as smooth as margarine and *way* over the top production including backing choruses and acoustic numbers like "New Generation Genocide." DEMERIT are to Chinese punk what RANCID were to North America twenty years ago: they've paved a road for a burgeoning scene that they still support and are a part of. Full endorsement. (WN)
(Maybe Mars)

DEMO – LP

Pretty catchy, mostly driving indie rock that leans to the punk side of things. Musically, it sounds shoegazey, not unlike SWERVEDRIVER. Vocally, it has that lazy Kelley Deal sound that complements the music pretty well. There are times when a more punky WIPERS influence creeps in, but for the most part, this wouldn't sound out of place on a '90s alt rock compilation. (PA)
(New Granada)

DIANETICS – "And Psycho Horse" EP

The followup to *Book Learned* (which was earlier released as a cassette along with this release) is a smooshed-together psychedelic / punk crossover, replete with effects galore. Almost every single song on here features a liberal smothering of envelope filters of some sort on the guitars and vocals, creating a super drugged out sound. While this works well for bands like DESTRUCTION UNIT and other bands aiming for noisier fare, here it dampens the punch of everything. The sole track without the phasers and wahs, "Workin' Down At The Doc (Marten Flagship Store)," reveals that underneath all the unnecessary effects is a competent Midwestern US punk band. It's a shame that the band chose to hide their songwriting skills under so many effects—I would love to hear this record without them. (JD)
(Weirdly)

THE DIDERS / DOA – split EP

I am a 45-year-old punk rocker from North America. And I saw Vancouver's DOA for the first time a few months ago. They started playing when I was like six years old...and they are still playing. And...they fuckin' *destroyed*. More energy than 90% of the current or "relevant" bands I see—even the "War" cover (you know the one) was a crusher. So how do these old(er) dudes hold up in the studio? Well? 1990's *Murder* was the last record I consciously listened to...and these two tracks blow that shit *away*!! All of the attitude and grit you want from Shithead, both songs are classic DOA with spit and vinegar and these motherfuckers can play hard. So sick. There's another side to this slab, and Beijing's the DIDERS hold up their end of the bargain with three tracks of shit hot casual punk. Buzzsaw guitars and a sound that fits in nicely with their Canadian counterparts. Surprise record of the month. (WN)
(Genjing)

DIRTY AND HIS FISTS – "Demo 2016" EP

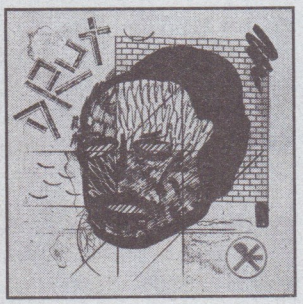
This came out just now, but it already feels dated given its title, *Demo 2016*. Future bands: If you anticipate being popular enough to have your demo pressed to wax, perhaps you should post-date your demo, like try the title *Demo 2023*, or maybe *Demo 2020*. Then you'll sound insane, pretentious, and not like yesterday's news, all of which are good things. Anyway, these LA punkers did sound good in 2016, but not as good as they eventually would sound on their 2017 EP on Feel It Records. DIRTY is tangentially affiliated with URANIUM CLUB and UROCHROMES, and it fits with that stuff, more or less, but this one is more to make the rockers go crazy. Always staying just this side of sleazy, *Demo 2016* is both tough and catchy, although the percentage of each varies per song. "Annihilation Now" gets the formula more right than the others. Fans of USELESS EATERS already own this. (MR)
(Negative Jazz)

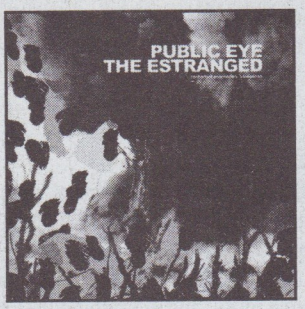
DISMALS – "Shortness Of Breath / Circled Thought"

This seemingly nondescript record packs a punch. The DISMALS are from Cherokee, Alabama, and if I am to believe what I read, they have been playing for ten years and just happened to drop in on the recording studio one night to record these two songs, which is the first time they have done so. The result being this their first record. I like a good backstory. The two songs are raucous garage punk with buried vocals. It sounds great. I like it. (CK)
(Arkam)

DRUX – LP

This record made me smile, mostly because it reminds me of SLEEP WALK, a San Diego hardcore band active until 2016 that I saw too many times to count and always had fun. The guitars reminds me of VOID, and other '80s Dischord bands. The vocals are raw and chaotic, like NEGATIVE APPROACH singer John Brannon's. The record also reminds me of Austin's GLUE. My favorite song is "Don't Judge Me," because it has a sick breakdown kicked off by the lyrics "*Get off my back!*" (AJ)
(Static Age)





EASTIE RO!S – "Achtung Stress!" LP

Berlin's EASTIE RO!S are here with their third LP and my first experience hearing them. They play super-tight melodic punk that rarely leaves the faster side of mid-tempo and the vocals are sometimes gang shouted in a way that makes them almost sound like a street punk band. *Almost.* It reminds me of some of the better No Idea-style bands before that whole melodic punk genre got run into the beard-encrusted ground. Fun, simple melodies get easily stuck in your head as the band plows through thirteen songs. (GH)
(Tomatenplatten)

ERIK NERVOUS – "Assorted Anxieties" LP

Over the years, ERIK NERVOUS's prolific home recorded output has been compared to CONEHEADS and slimy subhumans from the Lumpy roster, but there's one problem: *ERIK NERVOUS doesn't sound like any of that stuff.* Sure, there are some moments here and there, but overall, this is the sound of desperate suburban boredom and loner anxiety. Jangly, direct, raw, home recorded punk with this dude Erik playing everything himself. Sometimes, he dips into new wavy sounding jams, but overall, it has a little bit of a hyper ELECTRIC EELS feel, like if they freaked out on coffee, moved to a miniscule Indiana township and tried to write pissed off prog rock, but got it all wrong. This record collects a large handful of small-run cassettes, comp tracks, EPs, and unreleased songs into one long player, and it flows really well. Highly recommended. (GH)
(Neck Chop)

THE ESTABLISHMENT – "Vicious Rumours" LP

Tightly played mid-tempo punk from Netherlands with a cracking drum production. They've got nice varied sense of songwriting and are good at layering guitar and bass stuff in an interesting and pleasing way, but the vocals persist at a snotty yell the whole record, regardless of what the tone of the song is. So yeah, annoying vocals. There's likely a very gear-nerd guitar guy, as evidenced by the pedal stomping and curated guitar treats. The only thing I can think of that I can liken this to is maybe the ESTRANGED, though the ESTABLISHMENT comes off more flashy. (MA)
(Aggrobeat)

THE ESTRANGED – "Frozen Fingers / World of Birds"

Hmmmm...I really like the ESTRANGED, but perhaps they've entered their college rock phase? Remember how HÜSKER DÜ and REPLACEMENTS were punk bands that got kinda soft and safe? This doesn't sound like those bands, but it's a similar evolution. It's fine, ya gotta grow, don't play the same music over and over again forever. I can still sense the lasting spirit in "Frozen Fingers," but "World of Birds" does a neo-folk-into-prog thing that I was not expecting. I mean, if you've ever seen these guys do their thing you can tell they've been playing music together for a really long time—it's really cool—but I'm gonna have to pass on this one. (MA)
(Black Water)

THE ESTRANGED / PUBLIC EYE – split EP

Ten years ago, the ESTRANGED put out a split EP with AUTISTIC YOUTH on Black Water records, and now they're back on the same label putting out a split with PUBLIC EYE, which is almost all of the same members as AUTISTIC YOUTH. That info feels relevant somehow. Someone once described the ESTRANGED to me as "adult punk," and I can concur with that. They're very calculated and precise, playing energetic post-punk. Their main melody in the song "Sleepless" kind of oddly reminds me of the STONE ROSES "Made of Stone." Besides that, it's an excellent song and I can see why they dug it from 2013 to release it now. PUBLIC EYE plays an almost machine-like, minimalist, claustrophobic approach to synth-punk. Sounding a little like early TOTAL CONTROL or even MIND SPIDERS, the band builds on a simple riff and keeps expanding until it abruptly halts at the end. Both bands complement each other well and accomplish the impossible task of producing a split where both sides are equally good. (GH)
(Black Water)

EVIL ENGINES – "Drug City" LP

This record has the same guitar sound as the famous Southern California hardcore band SHATTERED FAITH. Actually, track number two on side one, "I Can't Call It," is a dead ringer for "1981" by SHATTERED FAITH. I love that sound (and that song), but I wasn't sure about this one when I first started listening, but it's been growing on me. I like it—it's got a deliberate tempo, which means not terribly fast, and it's catchy. It's also got some eerie lead guitar, handed out in doable doses. I also appreciate singers that can pull off singing without actually singing. (Don't try to read too much into that last comment.) Mastered by the master Kurt Bloch. This is a good one. (KK)
(Blahll!)

FILAMENTS – "Look To The Skies" LP

Whoa, the kids apparently still listen to the ska. Well, a bastardized two-tone ska mixed with Oi! / street punk and even some reggae and dub excursions. It's all a bit too perfect, with full instrumentation including Hammond B3 and horn section. If ska still sold, I could picture this in a car commercial, or at least knocking MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES off the throne. (GB)
(Pirates Press)

FIRESTARTER – "First Album" LP

It strikes me as immensely unfair that FIRESTARTER is almost exclusively referred to as a post-TEENGENERATE band. Sure, it makes sense from a lineup perspective, but FIRESTARTER deserve to be worshipped entirely in their own right. This first album is, in particular, full of almost impossibly big, buoyant pop hooks that defy the listener not to sing along, even if you don't know the words. Yet there's a sense of urgency to the music that keeps it firmly rooted in punk, preventing things from ever seeming stale. Secret Mission's recent reissue, 18 years after the record's initial release, is gorgeously done, with shiny new art and a lyrics insert to ensure that you're singing along accurately. (FIRESTARTER's lyrics, by the way, easily surpass

those of most native English speakers, from the perfection of album opener "Keith Richards Man" onwards.) Absolutely necessary for even the mildest of power pop aficionados. (MF)
(Secret Mission)

FIRESTARTER – "Livin' On The Heat" LP

Reissue of FIRESTARTER's great second LP from 2003. FIRESTARTER was formed by three members of TEENGENERATE after that band broke up. Fifi takes on the vocal duties. The music is much poppier, the recordings cleaner, but the rock'n'roll attitude is still there. These are obviously guys who love music and everything they do is a reflection of that. This is just a great record. I saw FIRESTARTER live a few weeks ago, and when they started "Johnny Moped Was Right" from this LP, I screeched louder than the people standing next to me would have liked. What a great band. (CK)
(Secret Mission)

THE GAY AGENDA – "Bear Fucker" 2xFlexi

Throw down hardcore from Southern California that stays unrelenting from start to finish. Some super-heavy breakdowns make way for the vocalist screaming his goddamn head off about everything from keeping your head up in the face of homophobia to getting pissed on by hairy cocksucking bears. Do you want metallic queer hardcore that embraces both spin kicks and gloryholes? Then this is for you. Bonus points for the perfect male ass framed by a neon pentagram on the cover. (GH)
(self-released)

GIANT PEACH – "But You Made Me Such a Beautiful Thing" LP

This is a gust of fresh fucking air that can clear out any farty dude-bro cave. The album begins with some harsh noise as an intro, leading into a LIZ PHAIR-like indie sound, and it's totally awesome! It's like if shoegaze wasn't awful and the good parts of that, grunge, and the MUFFS hopped into a super talented blender. If I haven't won you over on this band yet, I'm not going to, but damn, you should get up in this. It's a true delight. The occasional dark holes of noise enveloping haunting, layered vocals and jingly-jangly happy / aggressive guitaring is a sonic waterbed that's not terrible for your spine. "Sean Guess Who I Am" is a breathtaking eight-plus minute epic that begins with a field recording of streets and chimes that slowly fades into soft strumming and ghostly singing before the full volume song takes over a little after the ninety second mark. This whole album is a high point, but this song may be the highest high point. So good! (RH)
(Dead Broke)

HARD FEELINGS – "Side Ways" LP

Bouncy weirdo punk from Duluth, Minnesota in the vein of the MCRACKINS or RUTH RUTH. It fully feels intended to be played strictly in a musty basement at a house party. The song "Evildoers" is a lot of fun. If you have memories of that really cool band that played that house show in that one college town that one time when you were drunk but not too drunk and you think you bought a cool shirt but aren't sure where that is anymore but remember liking it a lot and really thinking that band was going places and kind of wonder if they're still playing because that would be totally cool if they still were and you'd totally see them again all these year later just to see how even better they must be now, this album is worth checking out. (RH)
(Dirt Cult / Lost Cat)

H-DIVISION – "Green Light" flexi

Super weird lo-fi industrial dance / mutant noise that is very good, though it is not done any favors by the x-ray flexi format. (WN)
(Winter Garden)

HEADON – "UBIK" LP

HEADON from Athens, Greece combines a dark, brooding darkwave sound with stadium-style '90s grunge. The track "Scum Manifesto" opens with a long, sparse, gothy intro that then explodes into a full-on *In Utero*-era NIRVANA discordant grunge crescendo. The vocal style varies from dramatic and understated to total unselfconscious major-label bravado. The band references both JOY DIVISION and SOUNDGARDEN as influences, and I wouldn't disagree! (HB)
(self-released)

HETEROFOBIA – "Sudor" EP

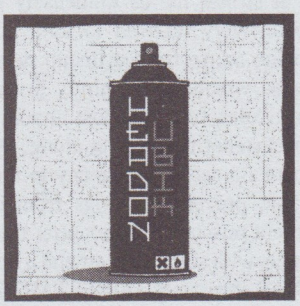
Don't sleep on this, it's so good! This is a vinyl release of six tracks from the band's electronic full-length, "Eres Tan Guapo," released in June 2017. Extremely gross, angry, and weird in all the right ways. The opening track's unhinged, screamy vocals complement surfy guitar leads drenched in reverb, while the rest of the record settles in to a more aggressive and straightforward punk sound without losing the freakyness of the opening vibe. The tracks reek with the same kind of urgency and desperation of early '80s LA punk, maybe a little like the SCREAMERS if they were a hardcore band. Lyrics in Spanish explore themes of fear, hallucination, decay, and death. The liner notes explain a little about the band's context in Monterrey, Mexico. The band talks about the challenge of being openly gay and engaging in critical discourse in a punk scene where there is little queer visibility, and in a city where homophobia is the norm. The record comes with super sexy handmade Xerox-and-spray paint artwork. Also, the band recently had their car broken into and their stuff stolen while on tour in Oakland, so if you buy the record online, consider tossing in a little extra to help out! (HB)
(Huayno Amargo / Sin Temores)

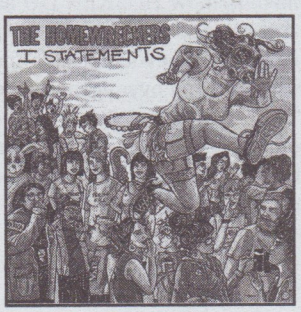
HEY HONCHO & THE AFTERMATHS – "Chico Purito!!" LP

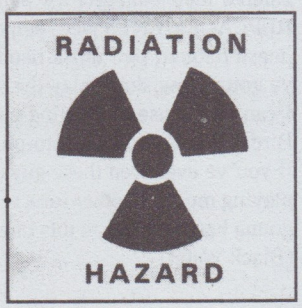
The Spanish band the AFTERMATHS joined forces with singer HEY HONCHO and *Chico Purito!!* is the result. This is heavy rock'n'roll punk. HEY HONCHO has a deep voice that calls to mind Handsome Dick Manitoba. The music is well played, but has this off-kilter quality to it. I sense a devil-may-care attitude involved. A record to listen to while drinking a beer. (CK)
(Hound Gawd!)

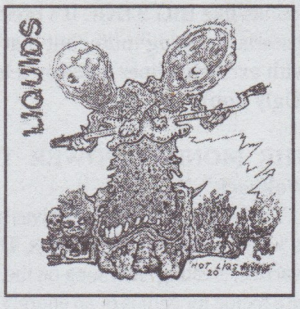
HOMEWRECKERS – "I Statements" LP

This record came out several years ago, but for whatever reason *MRR*









never got a copy until just now. Worth the wait. If you haven't heard this record, it's not too late. Still sounds just as fresh as it did in 2015. They're a pop punk band that's like an odd mix of SOMETHINGS WRONG and CRACKBOX. Like drunk-punk PINHEAD GUNPOWDER with crust-pop vocals. It's catchy, it's sloppy, it's beautiful. Yet the lyrics are probably the most memorable aspect of this album. Stories of struggles, love and living life in this fucked up world. I love this record. (FS)
(Nervous Nelly)

HYPER TENSIONS – "Movin Slow" EP

This may be reverb-drenched stoner rock, but it's ready to fucking party! Maybe it's the intense amount of over the top reverb, but it sounds like some serious lovers of some serious jangly arena rock like LOVE AND ROCKETS got together, but just wanted to rock it pretty hard. This is super killer, but damn that's a lot of reverb! I highly advise listening to this. (DZ)
(Neon Lava)

INSINUATIONS – "Prompt Critical / U.S. Muscle (My Head Is Made Of)"

Fringe punk re-release from 1980, both sides of this single were comped on *Bloodstains Across Virginia*. INSINUATIONS is deep, and deeply weird, but in a sunny, loose sort of way. Like a John Fogerty / DEVO dream team, this two-sided absurdity clamores along daring you to hate it. Not a joke. Comes across as a less serious, more pleasant country road version of PINK SECTION. For the already initiated, INSINUATIONS' singer includes some thoughtful liner notes here, which, if you were wondering, carefully explain the relationship between the phrase "prompt critical" and a nuclear power plant meltdown. Nerd music from a time when nerds didn't really have anything to do with computers. Not overly herky-jerky, and a little close to the mainstream, so I'm not sure art punks of the time really got into this. Their loss. A near perfect single. (MR)
(Feel It)

INVISIBLE TEARDROPS / TONY'S BITE – split EP

Of course, with Jamie Barrier at the helm, you know the reverb limits of every electronic device available will be pushed to the brink. If you think you've heard every sound Jamie has to offer after nearly two decades of putting out Americana like PINE HILL HAINTS or the WEDNESDAYS, you are in for a fucking treat. This shit totally fucking kills! Hammond dense, sparse, heavy, dirty power pop with Jamie's signature drenched croon! I must admit, I've known Jamie for years, so take that into consideration. On the other side, from Toyama, is TONY'S BITE. Blistering, robotic punk, teetering between totally goofy and totally solid, spastic rager. This is such a killer slab. I want a copy of this, badly! (DZ)
(Arkam / Snuffy Smiles)

KID CHROME – "I've Had It" EP

Completely fucking competent trashy punk that is also a one person band. It comes off as some Lumpy worship but with a super weird drum machine, like they stole it from LE TIGRE or something. I'm sure it wasn't the plan to sound like this, but it's really killer. The genres this band pulls from have been known to bore the absolute shit out of me, but check this out, please! (DZ)
(Neck Chop)

THE KREUTZER SONATA – "The Gutters Of Paradise" LP

Fast'n'tight professional sounding melodic punk—slick but super heavy. The melody is all through the guitars, though the overall presentation is ultra thick powerful. It's like LEFTÖVER CRACK (especially the vocals) without the ska parts, and with stadium crust production. (WN)
(Collision Course / Don't Panic / No Time)

THE LANDLORDS – "Hey! It's A Teemage House Party!" LP

Charlottesville, Virginia's the LANDLORDS remained obscure to me until Feel It Records issued *Fitzgerald's Paris*, a great collection of unreleased tracks from the band. This reissue of their first LP (issued in 1984) does not disappoint either! The LANDLORDS are reminiscent of SCREAM's early years in the sheer variety of artistic range over the course of the record's 21 tracks. There are arty hardcore tracks that sound like they should have been on the sequel to *Paganicons*, jokey numbers, and even one track that sounds that explores similar terrain to *Death Church*. While it is not without the occassional chaff, *Hey! It's A Teenage House Party!* shoulda been a hardcore classic. This reissue doesn't include any new music (although the download includes the demo!), but it does feature a great booklet complete with writings by vocalist John Beers, lyrics, photos, flyers, and more. Essential. (JD)
(Feel It)

LASER GEYSER – "Sons Of Lightning" LP

It's been eight years since this band released their last record, a long time between recordings. *Sons Of Lightning* is a nice combination of pop punk and power pop—mid-tempo and melodic and the songs are mostly very catchy. On the pop punk side, it gets a little close to stuff you can hear on "alternative" radio. On the power pop side, I am sometimes reminded of ASH. But there's something about the production that takes away from the record for me. It's lacking on the high end, almost like you're listening with ear plugs in. Despite that, I really do like it. (KK)
(self-released)

LIQUIDS – "Hot Liqs Revenge" LP

Blaster from Neck Chop Records, this is something of a sequel to LIQUIDS' earlier 12" *Hot Liqs*, and just as that record did, this one compiles a whole bunch of shit, new and slightly less new, conveniently putting it in one place so you can slam your head against the wall for twenty minutes a go without having to flip anything over. CONEHEADS-affiliated brilliance, LIQUIDS deals mostly in raw pop, but disguises it as lo-fi rock'n'roll or hardcore or other things that people like. It all runs together after a while, but that's sort of the point, and when it's this satisfying, there's no reason to care. (MR)
(Neck Chop)

LYSOL – "Teenage Trance / Chemical Radiation"

"Teenage Trance" flat-out destroys: a powerful and top-notch reshaping of the gunk-punk that made the DEFEX or the WEASELS household names. A criminally great frenzy that requires multiple spins. "Chemical Reaction" tends to strut more, recalling the moodiness and boom of BASEBALL FURIES. Still frantic, but measured in comparison to the lead track. Any inkling of LYSOL being slept on ought be dashed by this must-hear single. (MC)
(Neck Chop)

MA HOLOS – "Bee On A Rose" LP

This is groovy garage rock nouveau from Cleveland, OH. The music has that frantic jangliness I associate with this genre. The singer is sincere and earnest. There are a few vocal whoops à la THEE OH SEES. Although there seem to be many of the appropriate notes hit that would make this record seem stale, MA HOLOS manage to keep the sound fresh. (CK)
(Quality Time)

MALE PATTERNS – "Headaches" LP

Very generic mid-tempo hardcore that seems to be begging for a POISON IDEA comparison but doesn't nearly match that band's level of urgency or venom. The flat, tired-sounding recording does the band no favors, nor does the effort-free album art. To be fair, "Headaches" is a legit toe-tapper, an Oi!-touched stomper that recalls the best work of the SUSPECTS (DC). This is definitely a situation where less is more; there are enough good songs here to make a solid three- or four-song EP, but the lesser tracks drag the whole record down. (AU)
(Peterwalkee)

MARRÓN – "Terrenos" 12"

This is straight SWIZ love and fucking amazing. Sure, some RITES OF SPRING influence (check the last song on the A-side), but not as much as they had a couple years ago. It's aggressive but melodic punk with vocals that have a old school straight edge feel. The lyrics move between English and Spanish, with a strong social / political edge. It's well recorded, well played and true to the style in a way that makes you feel these folks have not only been a part of the punk scene for a long time but make what they sing about a serious part of their life. (PA)
(Verdugo)

THE MODERN MINDS – "GO" LP

If you know about early Canadian pop / punk rock, you've probably heard the name Moe Berg, later of indie sensations the PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. Moe started out in Edmonton back in the '70s first with the NEWS, and then with 3-piece outfit the MODERN MINDS, whose 1980 three-song pop punk EP is now legendary and goes for megabucks, especially in Japan. Well, the folks at Ugly Pop went digging and came up with a full album worth of material (eleven songs!) recorded way back then including the stellar punk rock live track "GO" and studio demo material. "GO" and "Theresa's World" are the standout punk tracks; most of the others spread out into rockin' pop / power pop territory—one of my fave unreleased tracks, "Tonight In My Room," sounds like BIG STAR. It's pretty rare for me to sit through a full LP of material wanting more, but that's exactly what happened here. Comes with extensive liner notes on a huge fold-out insert / poster. (GB)
(Ugly Pop)

THE MONKEY POWER TRIO – "The Ballad of Christian Wolfcock" 10"

The band describes themselves as a band who meets up one day every year to write and record a few songs. They show up with no pre-planning and no practice, creating each song on the spot in one or two takes. This could either be a recipe for genius or an entirely embarrassing disaster. Unfortunately, this falls into the latter category. The band stumbles through lackadaisical rock songs with nearly emotionless vocals that sound like they were recorded over the phone while doing their taxes. Other vocals are recorded in a falsetto tone that is hard to take seriously. I'm sure that this is a fun exercise for the people involved, but I'm not sure if it's the same for anyone else. (GH)
(Pocahontas Swamp Machine)

MONSTER SQUAD – "Depression" LP

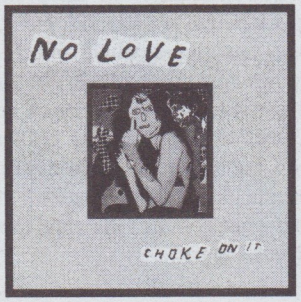
This record turned out a lot better than I thought it would since it's been more than ten years since Bay Area street punk / hardcore band MONSTER SQUAD's last release. It felt more grown up than the band's previous efforts, not to say they were juvenile. But maybe that's just me: I used to listen to this band a lot when I was young and hella into bands like the VIRUS and CAREER SOLDIERS. There's a clear theme to the record—depression—which is supported through brooding lyrics and melodic guitar riffs. The fast rhythms and drum patterns keep it punk—almost like a streetpunk version of EMBRACE. The lyrics are heartbreaking; my favorite line is *"It's hard to smile without any teeth."* It's the perfect record for fans like myself who loved the band at a different time in their life, and have grown alongside them. (AJ)
(Pirates Press / Voltage)

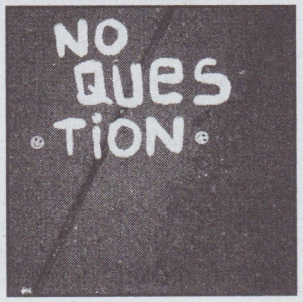
NO LOVE – "Choke On It" LP

First long-player from a Raleigh, NC band with a cool, not-trendy style. They mostly keep fast tempos, forceful but more punk than "hardcore" in spirit. They've got some glimmery guitar that reminds me of the last FACE THE RAIL record, and they temper some freaky noisy licks in to counter the melodies. The mix has a wild quality, I think due to various reverbs, but the result is high-energy. The singer reminds me a lot of the singer of CONFLICT (AZ not UK) in her aggressive-without-screaming style. While the whole LP sounds really good, I think the standout tracks are actually on the B-side. Tracks like "Same Shit" and "Back Taxes and Anaphylaxis" (apparently written by ISS) break the mold, while "Dogs//Wolves" is truly catchy and has managed to get stuck in my head the last couple weeks. I dig. (MA)
(Sorry State)

NO QUESTION – "Structures" EP

Grimy fastcore out of Madison, Wisconsin. These guys remind me a bit of SIEGE, mostly because of the totally shredding vocals. Muscly, they are slightly more restrained than the aforementioned band, but





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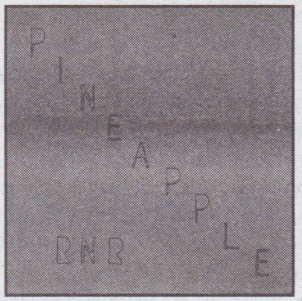
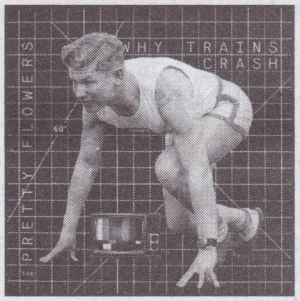




only very slightly. This is real fucking fast US hardcore with dissident guitar leads and a peppering of super sonic blast beats. Are you ready to step into the cyclone? (BA)
(Give Praise / Kitschy Spirit / Night Animal / Niteskool)

OLD CITY – "Future Dead" 10"

It's possible that I don't understand what this band is trying to do, because the entire release felt like one long dragged-out song. The title track has a chorus that definitely sticks out, but only because it breaks away from the monotony of the lead singer by adding a second vocalist. Nothing on this record really called out to me, or struck me as interesting. Mostly just uninspired, heavy rock'n'roll. (RS)
(self-released)

OUTER SPACIST – "Illness Is A-Creepin' On A Come-Up" LP

This has a nice sound to it. Imagine if Mark Arm was fronting a DEVO-ish band. There are synths, guitars, and drums making intergalactic sounds. It's far out. The vocals bring things back to earth with their intensity and earnestness. It's grunge meeting sounds crossing the heavens. That's a good thing. (CK)
(Heel Turn)

PINEAPPLE RNR – "Pineapple Riknroll" EP

Insane theatrical art punk from St Louis, featuring LUMPY on guitars, that sounds like an art school version of X-RAY SPEX without the undercurrents of nihilism, just the day glo snot. It might just be the sax giving the SPEX style impulses to my brains, but this definitely makes me think of bands that must have formed in smaller city art school zones in a post B-52s America. The vocalist has a real classic punk voice, a wild blend of LORA LOGIC and POLY STYRENE. The last song on the EP is my fave, when she sings about becoming dust it makes me think of an insane DEVO fan version of the SACCHARINE TRUST "We Become Snakes," which is a cool thing to think about. (LG)
(Lumpy)

PLEASE STOP – "Don't Smile" LP

I'm having a hard time getting over the fact that I don't like how the vocals are recorded on this album, so I suppose I should address this first. The vocals are highly distorted and compressed with a tinny effect, which unfortunately distracts from how she's singing her brains out. Songs are mid-tempo punk with metallic guitar, with an occasional hardcore breakdown and steady build. These Minnesota punks seem to be having a good time, so I'll give them that 'cause perhaps that's what matters. (CR)
(self-released)

THE PRETTY FLOWERS – "Why Trains Crash" LP

Clean, polished power pop from Los Angeles in the vein of SUPERCHUNK, and with a sound that has a lot in common with the forebear's more recent releases. There is also an occasional leaning into slightly more affected emo territory. Carefully composed songs with clean, tasteful guitar leads and truly thoughtful chord progressions. Nothing particularly groundbreaking here, but definitely some quality tracks that will have you feeling on top of the world one moment, then introspective, then a little nostalgic—in that dramatic pop-pop way. (HB)
(Dirt Cult)

PUG SKULLZ – LP

At their best, PUG SKULLS remind me of the ZERO BOYS record that no one cares about (it's worth the effort, trust me). But mostly it sounds like amped up California punk—they never come up for breath and you simply can't fake those vocals. No frills here whatsoever, just burn. (WN)
(Squatters, Inc.)

RATS IN THE WALL – "Warbound" EP

Straight to the point punk! Driving guitars, furiously shouted vocals, with plenty of switch-ups in rhythm that really keep the record moving forward. On this EP, RATS IN THE WALL are definitely harboring the same directness and rage as their southern California predecessors BLACK FLAG and CIRCLE JERKS but through a much different perspective and experience, with lyrics range from being an outcast to mental health to rejection of authority. Members of F-MINUS and GATHER, but such a different band musically speaking. Quick and to the point, with no songs lingering too long, making me want more! Not to mention a cover of "Removal" by SPITBOY, goddamn. The lineup has changed since this release with the singer moving on to other projects, but I am excited to see what the new lineup comes up with. (RS)
(Indecision / Programme Sounds)

REAL SICKIES – "Get Well Soon" LP

Man, this reminds me of something right of the bat. It's the way the vocals are delivered. Is it the BOOMTOWN RATS? Or maybe 999? Jezus, is this catchy. The guitars, drums, bass, even the vocals just have your head bouncing in no time. It's got elements of punk, new wave, garage, power pop, and just plain rock'n'roll. I love music that can be catchy as hell without being at all wimpy. One track after the other just delivers. It's obvious to say, but it's clear these guys did not grow up without owning RAMONES records. The record is just plain infectiously catchy and fun. Is it terrible to be fun? I hope not. (KK)
(It's Alive / Monster Zero / This Is Pop)

RICKY HELL & THE VOIDBOYS – LP

Chud-punk from Ohio. The Cuisinart guitar sound, semi-spooky keys / synth and generally nonplussed lead vox get me thinkin' of the SPITS as a touchstone here, which I theoretically support, providing there's a noticeable variant presented. The only real wrench the VOIDBOYS throw in the mode is dreamy pop noise, as their "Amphetamine Girl" is essentially a budget take on JESUS AND MARY CHAIN. I enjoy it to a surprising degree, though it's a rather isolated victory amidst the remaining passable moments heard here. (MC)
(Greenway / Quality Time)

THE RINGLEADERS – "Bi-Coastal Blasphemy" LP

The Ringleaders' pedigree boasts HELLBENDERS and CANDY

SNATCHERS connections, so your parents are probably pretty stoked to stream this while you're left rolling your eyes and reaching for TABLE SUGAR or something. Can't quite determine if this rawk is of the ragged or bloated variety, so let's just agree on both, shall we? I suppose one must weigh out, as there's an obvious reliance on lout screamin' and jet-guitar that seems to guide 'em. All things considered, I'm finding the measured moments (see "Bed Of Lies") most effective. The fact that a tune like that is present at all hints toward maturation, though punk'n'roll die-hards (still living?) should find no worries there. Still, dull. (MC)
(Hound Gawd!)

ROD OF CORRECTION – "Lies" LP

This crossover record is absolute genius, and I wouldn't expect anything less from my homie (singer) Colin and the supergroup of Southern Californians from bands TAKE OFFENSE, NARROWS and GODCOLLIDER. It's as eclectic as it is powerful, blending strong, catchy lead riffs with ripping fast parts, disjointed rhythms, and dystopian lyrics. You can hear clear influences from West Coast crossover bands like EXCEL and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES as well as NYHC legends LEEWAY and AGNOSTIC FRONT, but there's an epicness to the record akin to bands like NUCLEAR ASSAULT and KREATOR. My favorite track is POISON INSTITUTIONS, for that utterly brain-melting first riff and solo. (AJ)
(Indecision)

SEA LILIES – "Soonest" 12"

This Baltimore trio plays a brand of mature pop punk that often falls pretty far out of the pop punk realm. The more you listen to it, the more you realize that it's a little bit aggressive, a little less pop, a little bit angry, a little hardcore, a little post-hardcore, a little noisy, a little rock. It can go from sounding very much like early JETS TO BRAZIL to the poppier side of an AmRep band like COWS or HAMMERHEAD. Those familiar with some of the member's previous bands, SICK SICK BIRDS and DEAD MECHANICAL, won't be too surprised by this rather short six-song effort. It'll grow on you. (PA)
(Tired as a Chicken)

SHAVE'N'SHUT – "瓦尔登啤酒湖" EP

SHAVE'N'SHUT is an Oi! / street punk band from Beijing, China. They definitely draw influence from Oi! classics such as COCK SPARRER and the BUSINESS, while the anthemic parts and cleaner production quality brings Oi! contemporaries LIONS LAW to mind. The songs are driving, pissed, and balanced well with moments of melodic guitar work. The lyrical content seems to be critical of society and government while also maintaining a hopeful outlook. If you like your Oi! anthemic and melodic, check out this EP! (BP)
(Bords de Seine / Real Deal)

S.H.I.T. – "What Do You Stand For?" 12"

Let's begin with the amazing guitar and snare-roll tornado that opens the record, setting the bar pretty high...and then it just *never lets up*. The mix is loud, prominent guitars, and drums that cut through the distortion cloud just enough to let you feel the pulse. The power chord riffs are simple but arranged and performed with such conviction, and in perfect conjunction with corresponding rhythms in the drumming—that sounds too technical, but I'm trying to tell you there is a *craft* to this basic hardcore punk that makes certain bands / releases special. Even the sequence plays a role: ripping fast song, groovy less-fast but bouncy song, slightly faster and more driving song, then closed hi-hat fast song, blazing fast song, and then ease into to mid-tempo...and that's just side A! Seriously, though, you can put a bunch of songs out and call it a record, or you can put some thought into it like S.H.I.T did and have a masterpiece. Or maybe it just comes naturally to them? When we've heard thousands of punk and hardcore records, these things really begin to matter. Do I really need to explain more about how great this is? So many punk records, so little time—you'll want to make lots of time for this one. (MA)
(Iron Lung)

SPARKMARKER – "Products & Accessories" 2x12"

As far as I can tell, this is a straight reissue of the CD that compiled the pre-1995 record releases of the band. So, not that almost radio friendly, metalish type stuff from that weird late LP that nobody owns, but the more Revolution Summer influenced, post-hardcore stuff. Yeah, it's still pretty metalish at times, and it almost feels like RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE every once in a while, but it includes both the "Scallen" 7" and the one from No Idea, which is really what you need to hear from them. They were a bit of a West Coast answer to SHOTMAKER, pretty bass heavy, mid-tempo hardcore that was tagged as emo but could be heavier than a lot of punk at the time. It might not be essential, but worthwhile for old fans. (PA)
(Indecision)

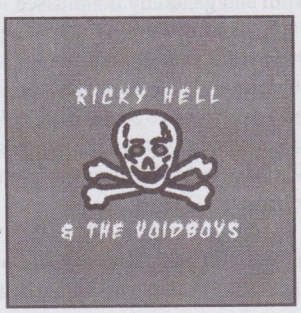
SPELLS – "Loose Change" LP

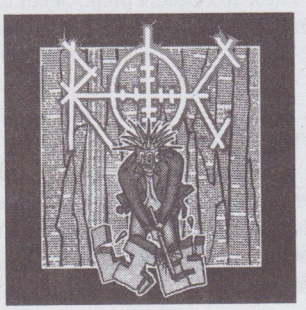
Anyone who has reviewed records before knows all about the horrors of the one-sheet. One-sheets aren't bad in theory, but when they are penned by some obnoxious dude from the record label (who refers to the bands as his employees) it can have a severe negative effect. I could go on, but this review should be about the record and not the record label. SPELLS are a pop punk band from Denver. Like a more produced TILTWHEEL, or OFF WITH THEIR HEADS with a slightly goofier approach to songwriting. I guess you could call it "party music." It's pretty positive in its nature; like they don't have songs about heartbreak, drug use, depression, or loneliness (almost standards in their brand of pop punk). Is it annoying or refreshing to listen to pop punk by a bunch of guys who don't hate the world? I'm not sure. (FS)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

SPIRITUAL CRAMP – "Police State" EP

This is a good EP for Bay Area hardcore fans to have in their collection: it fits in well between records from bands like CEREMONY and SABERTOOTH ZOMBIE. Don't get it twisted: though the band frequently plays with hardcore bands and is comprised of members

RECORDS





RECORDS

RECORDS

of well-loved past and current hardcore bands, the sound is far from hardcore. It's more like the CLASH meets MISSION OF BURMA—clear rock'n'roll themes with an underlying punk attitude. What makes it distinctively Bay Area is its darkness: there's a sense of frustration, both with the world and with the band members' lives. I think many of us have shared the feeling that the record exudes dealing with ridiculously high rent, an oppressive criminal justice system, and feeling lonely despite being constantly surrounded by people. The second song on the record—"850 Bryant," referring to the San Francisco Hall of Justice—surprised me: it's ska akin to "Police and Thieves" as covered by the CLASH. The main riff on the third song, "I Feel Bad Bein' Me" sounds a lot like "London Calling." The vocals are very similar to those of TALKING HEADS' David Byrne. My favorite song on the record is the last one, "Bloodclot," which ties it all together with some cool guitar effects in the verse, and an anthem-like chorus. (AJ)
(Deranged)

STATIC CONTROL – "Mais?" EP

STATIC CONTROL plays hardcore punk that seems to take influence from the '80s youth crew era. Bands such as UNIFORM CHOICE, BOLD, and VIOLENT CHILDREN come to mind when listening to STATIC CONTROL, although they generally seem to approach this style of hardcore from the faster and more punk side of things as compared to many contemporary bands who pull from similar influences. The songs are fast, stripped down, sometimes melodic ("Quick to Judge") and to the point. If you appreciate youth crew-era hardcore but have an aversion to how cheesey some of the current wave of bands are, you may dig this record! (BP)
(True Spirit)

STIFF LOVE – "In Trouble" EP

I was obsessed with the STIFF LOVE cassette so in turn was deeply gladdened to see this in my review pile. An Olympia supergroup that you must investigate if you are inclined towards the possibilities of an alliance between REMO VOOR fans and the GIRLSCHOOL song "Yeah Right." This sounds amazing, true music for delinquents and malcontents, each song is a monster hit. Dahlia's guitar tricks are a snotty miracle; I like the ghost extra guitar sound in "Trouble." An invigorating and powerful collection of songs for our reptilian times. Love this group and their vision. (LG)
(Neck Chop)

STRUGGLE SESSION / TEST – split EP

China's STRUGGLE SESSION (great name!) offer up four tracks of grind-touched emotive hardcore. The throat-shredding vocals and blasting drums drive the band, with some creative guitar flourishes that give the band an interesting and unique quality. Does MAKARA-plus-NASUM sound good to you? STRUGGLE SESSION is your jam. Brazilian guitar-drums duo TEST offer up two tracks of ultra lo-fi noisy hardcore with crazed creepy metal vocals and flailing drums. The songs are relatively straightforward and maybe a bit too long but it's engaging throughout and man, that drummer can fucking go! It's so strange it's hard to compare to anything in particular but I imagine this is what Brazilian noise-core bands like NOISE or INDUSTRIAL HOLOCAUST would sound like if they wrote two-minute, bridge-chorus-bridge type songs instead of seven-second blasts. Great split between two unusual sounding bands that I'd be interested to hear more from! (AU)
(Genjing)

SUCK LORDS – "New Lords Music" EP

Wooooooo!!!! Maximum energy raucous punk full of attitude and probably speed. Probably a lot of speed. Recording is blown to shit in every right way imaginable—the buzzsaw on "Grinning Man" that somehow can't quite keep up with the drums during the micro-split-secord straight punk riff that's gone before you are sure what happened...? Yeah, it's the shit like this that makes us keep listening, young punk. All fuckin' over the map, SUCK LORDS are a fresh breath of capsaicin that is just kicking your ass over and over. Check the bass break that starts a new riff that goes fucking *nowhere* at the end of "Folded." Yeah, it's brilliant. (WN)
(Stucco)

SYNDROME 81 – "Beton Nostalgie" LP

SYNDROME 81 is fucking great and if you've never heard them, please do yourself a favor and check them out. This LP compiles previous recordings from splits, a demo and single. SYNDROME 81 hails from Brest, France and they play melodic punk with an Oi! influence (or maybe the other way around?). Many of the riffs and gruff vocal delivery clearly shows the French Oi! (à la CAMERA SILENS and KIDNAP) influence as a foundation, but SYNDROME 81 builds so much on top of that that strays away from what many Oi! influenced bands would do. The songs are often somber and melodic, while other times, the songs are fast and pissed ("Traitre"). Some of the dark, melodic leads almost pull things in a post-punk direction. Every time I hear "Seul Contre Tous," it gets stuck in my head for days. I feel what SYNDROME 81 does by mixing Oi! with much more somber and melodic elements really sets them apart. I look forward to whatever comes next from SYNDROME 81. (BP)

TABLE SUGAR – "Collected Acknowledgements" LP

Sweet, angular and refined, TABLE SUGAR is a modern version of Lora Logic, the RAINCOATS, and the SLITS, with an '80s Brit Peel Sessions aura. Each song is highly melodic, and heavily reliant on the intertwining and weaving melodies that creates almost a soaring feeling, rather than pulse of percussion that usually pulls songs along. Ella and Paz's vocals are both sassy and ethereal, which adds to their art punk sound. There must be something in the water in Olympia. I cannot say enough good things about this 12", and short and sweet no less with only six songs. (CR)
(Stucco)

TABLE SUGAR – "Introductory Material" LP

Seeing TABLE SUGAR and GEN POP live in 2017 was a career

highlight for this brain-dead music consumer. TABLE SUGAR are the coolest, the tapes were like an endless birthday party to my brains, and to finally have a 12" in my grips feels utopian. The music is transcendent girl art punk linking up the FOAMS to DRESS UP AS NATIVES in my mind, but this group is not some referential reenactment troupe; they make a sound that is theirs and only theirs. It is as adventurous and dreamlike as the first time you heard the first LILLIPUT LP, in fact my use of the words transcendent and utopian are not a stretch! This is truly a dream, truly an adventure! I want to live in the world that this record has made. Is Olympia the birthplace of sound? It very well might be so... Get this and their 12" immediately; it's a map to the stars. (LG)
(Water Wing)

TARANTÜLA – "The Very Best of Sex and Violence" EP

Upbeat and growly hardcore punk from Chicago-based rockers, with a street punk streak and even a little bit of rock'n'roll guitar shredding. The sound does not stray far from the band's previous releases. The vocals are low, gritty, and blown out, while the rest of the instruments are relatively clean. All of the the six tracks are completely moshworthy MOTÖRHEAD-inspired punk mayhem. The record sadly does not include the band's punk interpretation of VENOM's "In League With Satan," which comes with the cassette and digital release. (HB)
(Deranged)

TIED TO A BEAR – "True Places" LP

This record just did not do anything for me. Just as soon as it feels like the song is going in a direction that leads me to believe they are onto something really interesting, they fall flat and play right into the Fat Wreck Chords "songbook of poorly executed punk." There are some catchy moments, however. I couldn't help but nod along to "300 Days," but the last track, "Grains Of Sand" is probably the strongest track on this LP. It is a musical break away from the rest of the record that includes a synth organ along with some syncopated playfulness with the guitar and bass bouncing off of each other, a drum roll, and unfortunately way too many "*yeah, yeah, yeah, yeahhh*"s that ultimately bring the record to a close. If TIED TO A BEAR went more in the direction of "Grains Of Sand", and less of the "Warped Tour circa 1998," it would pique my interest slightly more. All in all, this band seems to be way too interested in sounding like other bands and not themselves. Which is why I suggest a soft pass, and to just listen to SMALL BROWN BIKE or the LAWRENCE ARMS instead. (RS)
(Gunner)

TOECUTTER – "Divin Be Daft" EP

Even if this were the greatest 7" ever recorded, I wouldn't be able to get past the problematic third song, titled "Soft Enough to Cut," which appears to be about wanting to stab a "*fucking stupid cunt*" who the singer apparently thinks is weaker than him. It's 2018, and punk has moved way past that kind of talk. Everything else on the DRI-and-shitty-beer-inspired 7" seems fun, or whatever. There's an ode to tallboys, there's an apparent ode to a loved one laid to rest, the band is all smiles in the pics, the whole thing is fraught with Mad Max references and samples. That song really ruins the fun for everyone. (AJ)
(New Audio Terror)

UNRESTRAINED – "Inside My Head, Black Meets Red" EP

Slow, brooding metallic hardcore out of Portland. It's that kind of shit that keeps you deep in the pit, because it's breakdown time, all the time. With all the palm muting, and NYHC references, it sounds like a band you might have gotten your ass kicked to in the late '90s. Not bad, but I personally prefer to get my ass kicked to something a little faster. (BA)
(Indecision)

WOUND MAN – "Prehistory" EP

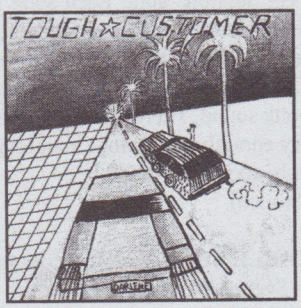
Are you a total freak looking for some gnarly, old school powerviolence, but all you can seem to find is a bunch of goofy posers? This band out of Massachusetts might be exactly what you're looking for. These guys lay down that classic West Coast-inspired maelstrom, with plenty of oozing sludge to keep the anxiety always in the red. Death to false powerviolence indeed! (BA)
(Iron Lung / MA Glory)

V/A – "Benefit for Big Frank" LP

So here's the good news: this is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a benefit for SoCal punk stalwart Big Frank (proprietor of Nemesis Records, longtime manager of the Zed Records shop and member of CARRY NATION) to help with medical bills. The album consists of mostly previously-released songs by a diverse range of bands, with a primary focus on metallic hardcore, including TERROR, INTEGRITY, DISFEAR, ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN and NAILS. The bad news is that one of the bands handpicked to appear on the album is LEVIATHAN, a black metal project whose sole member was rather famously convicted of domestic battery several years ago. Obviously, said abuser will not be benefiting financially from the sale of this record, but it's still an issue that hangs heavily over this otherwise well-intentioned project. Some will care, some will not, but those of you who didn't know deserve the heads up before you consider purchasing the record. If that is an issue for you but you still want to give, there are other fundraisers for Big Frank that are easily found online. (AU)
(Not Like You)

V/A – "Lost Artifacts: Indecision 100" 10"

Has it really been that long? I can still remember buying Indecision Records #1, THEE STRIFE 7" way back in 1992. Well, fifteen years later they finally hit release #100, and it's a 10" with five unreleased tracks from five Indecision bands: OVER MY DEAD BODY, COUNT ME OUT, THROWDOWN, DEATH BY STEREO and FADED GREY, all recorded between 1999–2003. Highlights for me are OVER MY DEAD BODY, which almost sounds like a lost SWIZ outtake, and COUNT ME OUT, but if you're feeling nostalgic for turn of the century SXE mosh, this is a good place to start! (GB)
(Indecision)



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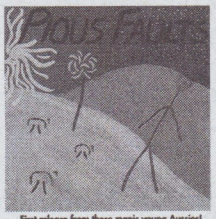

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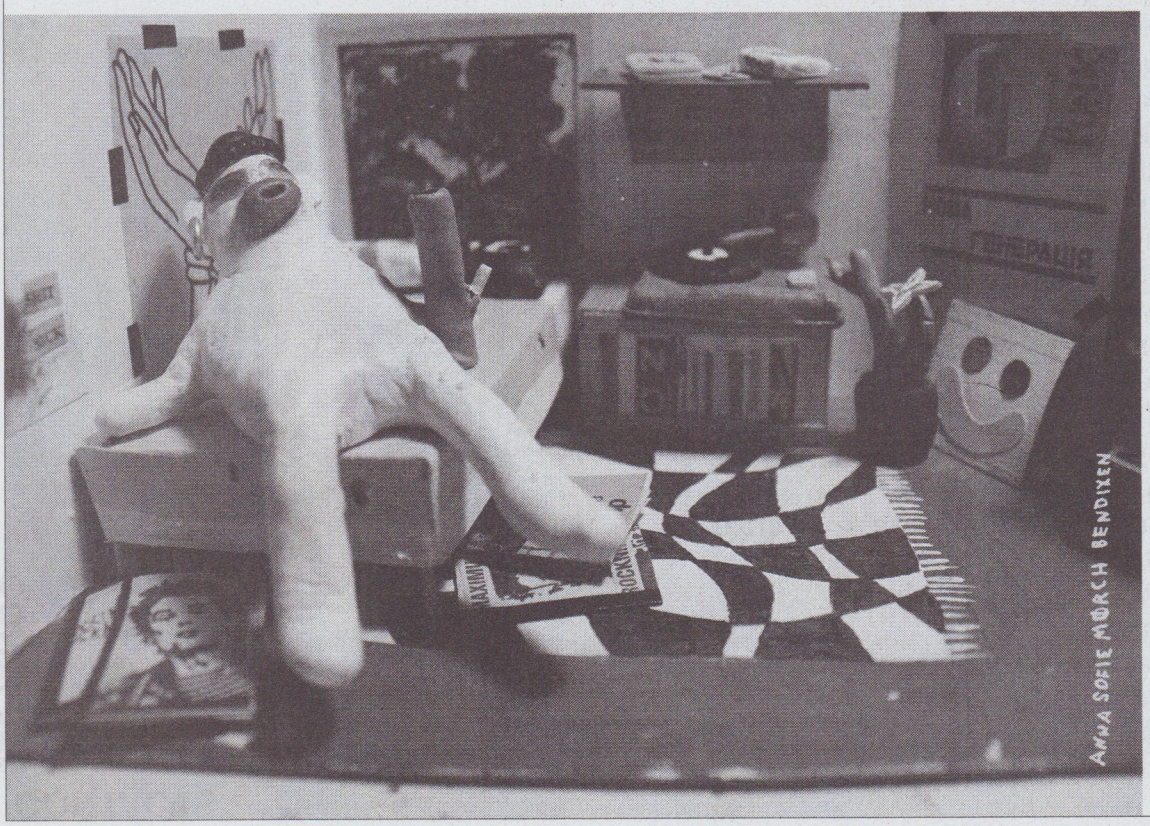

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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(GH) Greg Harvester
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JB) Julia Booz
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(MD) Michael De Toffoli
(RS) Ramy Silyan
(WN) Robert Collins

AWAKEBUTSTILLINBED – *What People Call Low Self-Esteem is Really Just Seeing Yourself the Way That Other People See You* – AWAKEBUTSTILLINBED is the perfect band name for what they're trying to do. Heavy, but almost forgiving, like deciding in the moment to take a mental health day without any guilt. For the majority of the album the singer's voice is especially quiet and almost sweet, kind of meek in the way that she's calling herself out for how her past experiences are affecting her life today. When she does erupt in a full-throated scream it sounds really natural and almost unintentional, like it's so far up to the surface that it's boiling over. Channeling the emo generation in the early 2000s that sidestepped MTV pop punk giants and stayed with their hardcore roots, this tape belongs in the same conversation as ALEXISONFIRE and GET UP KIDS, but with a modern gaze and atmosphere. Giving in to a depression day and lying in bed long after the sun comes up, letting your mind wander, and connecting the dots of your life so far is a great visual for how I felt when I listened to this one. I was captivated for the entire thing. They toured this last year with MOM JEANS and then with JOYCE MANOR, so I think we're going to be seeing them a lot really soon. (MD) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, awakebutstillinbed.bandcamp.com)

BARRICADED SUSPECTS – *Enough* – Hits me sorta like the first time I heard San Diego's NEIGHBORS, which is to say: in the face. Breakneck hardcore that would have likely found a home on Kangaroo or some other American hardcore fetishist label *(that's not a diss, Kangaroo just seemed to know good USHC more than most US labels did at the time)* fifteen years ago. No frills here, just ripping, and the midpaced steamer "Usurp" is loose and dirty in all the right ways. The legacy of Tennessee hardcore continues... (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, barricadedsuspects.bandcamp.com)

B'CE N THA BLOODY MONEY – *Street Dreamz* – You ever hear a band and immediately wish you were in that band? The music is power chord verse / chorus with a few *schwana-nah* licks thrown in, but the vocals take it up. The lyrics are simple but affecting, and shouted more than sung, although tunefully yelled in a way that initially comes across like karaoke. It's the content mixed with the delivery that really drew me in. This isn't the same shit you've heard a million times: the first song "Raid" is about your house getting raided by the pigs and hiding the drugs. Made me google "what is a jail purse." I found a music video for the hit, which is titled "Fuck the Police" and has the earworm lyric "*Fuck you, fuck me, fuck the police / Times 3!*" where the singer flips off the camera a lot and appears slightly bored, but I was unable to determine where I have to drive or fly to in order to appreciate this band live. The tape is glitter painted and with a hand-lettered tape label, but has no contact info nor point of origin. (JB) (3-song cassette, lyrics included)

REG BLOOR – *Sensory Irritation Chamber* – Promo disc of a proper full length from avant garde / no wave guitarist REG BLOOR. A supreme slab of sonic mindfuckery, *Sensory Irritation Chamber* is a lot to take in (which is exactly the point)—piercing, shrill guitar layers and hypnosis-inducing atonal attacks that drag you screaming into a dark nowhere land of sound. For the uninitiated: Bloor has spent most of the last twenty years working with GLENN BRANCA, which should give you at least a little context. A truly transcendent release that is most certainly not for the faint. (WN) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, regbloor.com)

BOY(MOUTH) – *It's Because We Are Retarded* – Careful readers of this section will recall my glowing review of the *Face Cake / Fart Meat* demo... Well, those words might have been tempered slightly had I started my foray into the world of BOY(MOUTH) with *It's Because We Are Retarded*. Not because this recording is a let down in any way, quite the opposite—it's just harder to describe such monumental achievements after I set the band's bar so high with my previous praise. This plastic disc contains almost an hour of trippy bedroom missives, dirty rock'n'roll, accidental no wave genius, and plenty of other moments that fervently defy description. The shit-fi shenanigans aren't gone entirely, and the levity provided by a surprise dancefloor burner like "I Want 2 Fuk Your Face" is perfect. All jokes aside, this can be a hard toke all at once, but I think that might be part of the intent... (WN) (14-song CD-R, lyrics not included, c/o D. Bale, 1333 NE 71st , Portland, OR 97213)

COHERENCE – It seems like every month I review a tape by a Bay Area band that I've never heard of. I hope this is a product of a burgeoning scene filled with new bands and not a(nother) indicator of my advancing age (the reality likely lies betwixt the two suggestions). Excellent mid-paced heartfelt punk from COHERENCE, comparisons to fellow Bay denizens DAIKON, with discordant guitars ripped straight from the basements of the '90s and later Kirsch level intensity in the vocals. I need to pay more attention... (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, fuckcorporations.bandcamp.com)

CONTRA CONTROL – *EP* – Lo-fi Bay Area raw punk hardcore with aggressively grinding guitars, subtle stinging bass, empowered captivating vocals, and diminutive pogo compositions. Politically conscious and proactive liner notes and sampling. Reminds me of SEDITION, ATOXXXICO, PLOMO, RATOS DE PORÃO. I certainly want to see this band live. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, kukaraxas.bandcamp.com)

DAYTIME DRUGS – *Elvis Doesn't Love You* – Disaster rock'n'roll from Portland, Maine. Think really, really inept CHEATER SLICKS. Or, if you're a dick, garage rock that will be hated by fans of THEE OH

DEMOS

SEES, or, better still, garage rock that will be tolerated by fans of whatever that band John Dwyer was in before THEE OH SEES *[eds.: COACHWHIPS]*. Junk recording technique of mixing all the drums hard right and all the guitars hard left. This accentuates perfectly the drummer's "I've never heard this song before" technique. No bass. "Help Me Build the Pyramids" is a good song title. I misunderstood the lyrics to that song as "Elvis Built the Pyramids," which also would have been a good song title and is also true *[Eds.: no, not true]*. Harmless and disposable, like a whole lot of great art. (MR) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, daytimedrugs.bandcamp.com)

DENY – *Parasite Paradise* – Clenched fist buzzsaw Swedish D-beat attack. These fellows have been at it for well over a decade, and the dedication shows. Fast, pounding and killer. (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, denyhc.banfcamp.com)

DESTRUYE Y HUYE – Ha! Bold move alert: opening your new release with a hardcore punk song with synth tones in place of guitar and bass. Guess what? It's fucking awesome! It's been four years since we've heard from these four badasses from L.A., and this is certainly a welcomed return. Their rambunctious bouncy D-beat punk is briefly interrupted by the dark and TOZIBABE-esque "Me Encantas." So much anger, so much passion. Best tape this month! (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, entukara.bigcartel.com)

THE DRAINS – Buffalo's the DRAINS have almost-surfy guitars but fuck it up with garage punk overtones that'll negate any beach visions on the horizon. Sometimes impassioned, sometimes monotone and repetitive lyrics bring you songs of dumpsters, dogs, owning guns, and palm trees. Some of the songs repeat the same lines over and over to little effect...barely building to anything. The band is caustic and crashing, but the lyrics almost feel like an afterthought. (GH) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedrains.bandcamp.com)

DUMB VISION – *A Total Commitment To Evil* – Fast and catchy shit that one might find in Chattanooga. I could hear *MRR*'s Greg Harvester playing for this band ten years ago, releasing a cassette and then going on one tour before breaking up. I kinda think about stuff like this as pop hardcore instead of pop punk, even though that's ridiculous...but it has the melody and hooks of melodic punk but it's really fast and has teeth. And besides, I am an unpaid shitworker so I can make shit up willy nilly, so this is a really good pop hardcore demo with a muddy recording. There. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, dumbvision.bandcamp.com)

ELEPHANTS – *Endless Arcade* – Indie punk like this always makes my heart swell up and keeps me going and growing through the heavy times. They have really positive coming of age vibes that bring back that same feeling of the last day of school, or moving away and seeing your hometown in your rearview mirror. It's very tight and well-executed poppy punk that would also definitely still do the Midwest Emo scene from back in the day proud. Tight like PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES, fun like SUPERCHUNK, and still confidently reflective like JETS TO BRAZIL, all with fairly soft vocals in front of good chunky banger melodies and smart sharp leads. This is the kind of music that got me through high school, and I'm glad that it's still alive and well. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, those-elephants.bandcamp.com)

EMPIRE JUSTICE – *Don't Forget Your Immigrant Blood* – Clenched fist anti-colonial Oi!. This reviewer could do with a touch less rock'n'roll and a touch more speed, but there's no denying the power of tracks like "Colonial Myths" and "1886." (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, empirejustice.bandcamp.com)

FEALTY – This one is real nice...a thick, forceful anarcho hardcore rumble with ramshackle drums that keep the whole band's sound well on the weird side of the punk spectrum. With songs that lurch more than surge and powerful vs. desperate vocal tradeoffs, the heavy sound stands in contrast to the songs FEALTY delivers, which is part of their appeal. Excellent demo—urgent and very real. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, fealty.bandcamp.com)

FEX HUBRIS – *Blood & Guts* – So I guess when this whatever wave of punks playing mysterious goth punk really settles in and stuff starts sounding punk again, but darker and weirder...it just means that the best bands sound like the VSS? I mean, not exactly or anything, but I pulled out *Nervous Circuits* as soon as *Blood & Guts* was over and I stand by my first impression on this one. "Tombland" is probably the coolest song I will hear this month, and fans of maximum energy tormented / demented driving dark punk will want to pay close attention to FEX HUBRIS. It's about time people started drawing their mysterious tendencies from GERMS and BIRTHDAY PARTY instead of the CURE, you know? (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, sewerdrips@gmail.com)

THE GLOBS – A quick two-song banger from Sacramento's the GLOBS. The first song sounds *almost exactly* like a lost BANANAS song, mostly because the same singer / guitarist is responsible for both bands and this song is not a departure from that style in the least. So, it's excellent if you like the BANANAS...and I do. They follow it up with a laid back cover of (arguably) the best DEAD KENNEDYS song, "Moon Over Marin." The coda of the song contains a drum fill that the drummer of the BANANAS has nearly trademarked, thus keeping them tied to the singer's other band. Don't get me wrong, this tape is great and well worth your time, but it just sounds like...that other band. (GH) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, globsfromoutterspace.bandcamp.com)

GOVERNESS – *Zero* – Dreamy harmonies tempered even further with gratuitous reverb and multi-tracked vocals, complementing '60s-girl-band-level songwriting sensibilities. The songs are beautiful and hypnotic, and sometimes just a little creepy. A bit along the lines of BRILLIANT COLORS or the first VIVIAN GIRLS record. The tape also folds in some dynamic shifts, dysphoric breakdowns, and gentle tambourine accompaniment within its full-length album's worth of songs. (HB) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, governessdc.bandcamp.com)

HEALERS – *Street Sweeping* – HEALERS have been charming the SF Bay Area with mostly the same set of songs since 2012. It doesn't fit into any particular box. The sound blends fuzzed-out trebly synth, rumbly bass melodies, and heavy but precise post-punk beats. Every time, the songs crack open my goddamn heart with just the right combinations of punk grit, melody, dancey momentum, and vulnerability. I wouldn't complain if they just kept doing the same thing forever. This band pierces the hard shell of self-consciousness off all the secretly-squishy punks who look like they know how to look, and know how to sound like they are holding it all together. HEALERS remind us that it's OK to be in pain. This new set of six songs takes the same sound to a slightly more complex place without disturbing the balance of toughness and emotion. The band's bassist, Milla, sings more on this recording than previous releases which is exciting and adds a lot to the mix. Can't recommend this enough. (HB) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, healers.bandcamp.com)

FRANK LAMBERT – *Favorate [sic] Flavors* – A true freak-feast of lo-fi hyper speed punk. Ramshackle drum machine (maybe) beats (loops, really, the beat never changes at all) drive these tracks relentlessly forward with no nuance while a guitar monotonously plows through two or three or four chords with mind-numbing repetition. And it's amazing.

VILENTLY ILL, MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE for reference, but this Lambert guy plays the game with a level of irreverence that is noteworthy even amongst one-man shit-fidelity royalty. (WN) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, no contact info)

LAWMAN – *On Patrol* – Hard hitting Motörpunk with gruff end-of-the-world vocals. A rough recording helps this one out a fair bit, giving the butt rock moments some needed teeth and letting the free range rage ride free. Somewhere between ANNIHILATION TIME and INEPSY, but with a dusting of east coast HC. (WN) (? song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

LONG GONE – Excellent uptempo guitar heavy melodic punk with a vocal delivery that is will appeal to fans of SMOKING POPES, WEAKERTHANS, NOVA MOB and the like (and yes, I *do* know that those two bands aren't really alike at all, I'm setting some "appeal parameters" here). There's a country twang to the guitar that rarely translates to the rest of the music, but they shine when it does as on "Used To See You." A nice departure from the typical fare scooped from the demo box at *MRR*HQ, and a tape that will likely get frequent spins at MyHQ. (WN) (7-song cassette, no lyrics, c/o reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

MATERIAL – Vancouver's MATERIAL is awesome. Period. They play gutsy and heartfelt melodic punk / post-punk that does not fall into the trappings that this statement might lead you to believe. Their lyrics deal with anxiety, feeling betrayed, the importance of safe use and harm reduction for addicts (and everyone), the fucking cops and more. They have a keys player (not synth) that adds some cool layers to the sound as the guitar sometimes goes off into a stratospheric, yet tasteful solo. MATERIAL is raw, real, and writes lasting songs that stay in your head...but not in a bad way. Excellent tape! (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, materialtheband.bandcamp.com)

MOLISMA – *Tainted Mass EP* – Wow, I have to admit my experience with Greek punk and hardcore has been comprised of much darker, heavier, slower bands. This is straightforward, brutal, blistering punk that shines with independent intention and enlightened negativity. Frothing vocals, fast as fuck musicianship, and intensely catchy. Yet another country / scene I need to get schooled on. This tape rules. (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, molisma.bandcamp.com)

NEGATIVE DEGREE – *Beat The Crowds* – Classic USHC with the energy of the early '00s resurgence of good, sharp, fast and loud. Jeff Klein in the vocals, '80s DC and L.A. oozing through all the riffs—makes sense I guess, Colorado lies between the two. Just a short burst of good ass 'merican 'core, not a surprise at all considering how consistently killer this band's releases are. (WN) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, no contact info)

NIL – *Something Out of Nothing* – Bay Area punk that employs intricate guitar melodies that might bring HÜSKER DÜ and PEGBOY to mind. Sometimes they have the melodic swagger of the CLASH without being a boring throwback band whatsoever. I like that there's not any wasted moments on this entire tape. Every song sounds confident and fully realized...instantly memorable and amazingly catchy. I love it. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, something-out-of-nothing.bandcamp.com,sugarmountainrecords@gmail.com, PO Box 1791, Oakland, CA 94604)

NO GENTLEMAN – **C*E*L*E*B*R*A*T*E** – Charming basement recordings from a seemingly lefty-leaning Oregonian band. Not firmly planted in any punk subscene, they would probably appeal more to DIY pop punk fans (I know...), but would complement any punk bill except maybe anything entering crust territory. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, chrisacox6@gmail.com, nogentelmen.bandcamp.com)

NOPE – *Why Are We Here? Why Does It Happen? aka Demo 2* – Demented punk burners packaged with mysterious intent. Peppered with anthemic (dare I say "melodic"? I think I not dare...) leads and vocal patterns that are just itching to get stuck in your head (for days), NOPE burn through six criminally short tracks of proficient freak punk that teeter between nihilistic garage-core and high waisted dirty white pants Midwestern punk...I am pretty stoked that I can't seem to figure them out, but instead of trying to dissect NOPE I just keep listening to NOPE. Into this. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, nopewpg.bandcamp.com)

THE PHAT CARDINALS – *Good Times* – Self described No. 1 Surf Punk in the UK (and sexiest band in the world...ever), the PHAT CARDINALS just sound like retro pompadour rock and roll—well coiffed bar adult punk with a rockabilly guitar. Sounds like a party waiting to happen. (WN) (4-sond CD-R, lyrics not included, thephatcardinalsband@gmail.com)

PLAGUE BOYS – Dirty synth- and drum machine-driven punk that sounds like the unholy synthesis of the SPITS and COCKNEY REJECTS. High energy and clever, with piercing leads and surprisingly original riffs. PLAGUE BOYS are ready to take Oi! to the disco dancefloor. This raises the question of whether automation has always secretly been the logical conclusion of punk's flirtations with mindlessness. I wonder if the name is a play on "playboys," but there's not enough information in this tape to come down either way. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, plagueboysband@gmail.com)

PRAYING – *Bastard Gas* – Experimental, noisy doom sludge from Oakland, CA with lots of feedback and down-tuned, near-stoner moments. Possibly taking some cues from THOU (they cover them) and *Bullhead*-era MELVINS, PRAYING turns everything up to twelve to suck the air out of everything in the room. There is one way-too-long sample that detracts from the flow of the tape, but overall this is very satisfying. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, praying.bandcamp.com)

THE RANTZ – Straight forward UK pub punk. Well played and engaging, with a hint of darkness and mystery lurking in the tracks (particularly the guitars) even when they open it up as in "Snakebite." I'm not sure if the world needs more anthems like "Bands, Booze & Tattoo's" *[sic]*, but there's something to be said for having a pint and blasting three chords from time to time. Ex-SACRILEGE, for those keeping track of such things. (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, therantz1977@talktalk.net)

RICKY HELL (FEATURING THE VOIDBOYS) – *Welcome 2 Hell* – This is a brilliant intersection of blissed out late '80s college alt / noise pop (SPIRITUALIZED, MERCURY REV) and classically quirky Ohio proto-punk (PERE UBU, ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS) with a touch of BILLY SYNTH and / or HAWKWIND peeking out from behind the curtain just to remind you that you are experiencing something special. Just as good at riding one riff into space as he is at crafting a perfect pop song, this is a great introduction to RICKY HELL—an introduction that led this reviewer to several more releases, including a different version *(?)* of *Welcome 2 Hell* titled *Hell Is Real*. I might be hooked. (WN) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

RIGHT IS WRONG – Six songs in eight minutes. Hand-assembled photocopied CD packaging and heavy-handed song titles like "Ban The Guns" and "Not My President" foreshadow the musical content. Minimal, mid-tempo, three-chord punk that is apathetically poppy and nearly as apathetically performed

DEMOS

on just guitar and drums. There's something charming about how dumb this is. I can relate to feeling mentally stunned by our current political circumstances in a way that should be expected to induce us to cheerfully drool out lyrics like, "There is not future. None left. All gone. No. No. No." (HB) (6-song CD-R, lyrics included, rightiswrongband.wordpress.com)

RIVERSEDGE – *New Hope For The Dead* – After round after round of contrived misanthropy and piles of flavor of last month demos, it's actually refreshing to hear some shamelessly derivative punk rock. Not that Ohio's RIVERSEDGE lack originality by any means, but the roots are so plainly visible that you can feel instantly at home. File alongside DEAD BOYS, DAMNED, PERE UBU, EDDIE & THE HOT RODS...there's a place for classic punk on everyone's shelf, even if it was recorded in 2017. (WN) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o Lifer Tapes, 2201 Kirby Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37404; lifertapes@gmail.com)

ROBOTNÍČKA – Ummmm, I dunno, man. 100% freak show party dance punk, complete with a keytar and disco beats...and then the vocals have all of the fire of Eastern European hardcore. Maybe you need to hear it to understand, but I'm telling you that *this* particular combination of elements has never quite existed, and I'm telling you that this is exciting. Perhaps old news for some, as this tape was recorded in 2007 and released for their 2016 Japanese tour, but I'm fine being late to party as long as I'm invited. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, robotnicka.bandcamp.com)

SAKKARA – Challenging all previous (mis) conceptions of noisecore, SAKKARA take seemingly competent hardcore punk and simply obliterate it. When the vocals are present, there's nothing present but vocals and the effects used to make them sound like they are coming from underneath a lagoon. When they stop, you can hear the faint suggestion of something like a dark hardcore punk band who loves the shit out of freaky '80s Japanese shits (this might be an accident, but if it is, then it's a very fortunate accident)...and then the dude starts singing and it's like your trip is starting all over again. Top notch delivery and / or butchery. (WN) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, no contact info)

SEKAANNUS – *Demonokratia* – Active from '83–'89, this Finnish band resurrected itself in the early '10s and have a few slabs under their belts since. The sound is meaty Finn-core, but decidedly dad punk sounding compared to their '80s output (the band was completely new to me and I had to look them up, but the *Kutsu* EP is a fuckin' cold punk killer). "Nekroteknoraati" is the burner here, closing the demo on a hard charging gruff punk note. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, sekaannus1.bandcamp.com)

SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA – You've heard raw and brutal assaults before, but rarely does noise punk get this fast or this intense. Carefully crafted from the DISCLOSE mold, Melbourne's SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA are the very embodiment of raging noise with desperate throat shredding Spanish language vocals, and they are just so fuckin' fast. It's a short tape, but I don't think most folks could take much more. Self-released a while back, since (thankfully) repressed by a few labels for your consumption convenience. Highest studded-jacket noise-not-music recommendation. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o 4490records.bandcamp.com; nopatiencerecords.bandcamp.com)

THE STEELERS – A dark and breathy two-song offering of melancholy reduced to its most minimal (each of this Australian act's five releases is a two-song cassette, a concept I endorse). A bedroom guitar mopes lazily in front of tracks dragged forward by drummer's-first-drumbeat slowed down to 16 RPM while vocals are softly spoken in an effort to cause as little interruption as possible. In other words: the STEELERS are brilliant. It's like CODEINE, but with the fidelity and sincerity of the perfect teenage shoegaze demo from 1989...you can't fake this. (WN) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, thesteelers.bandcamp.com)

TIME FRAUD – Oakland weird-dog jamming out on home recorded (and sometimes in-a-truck recorded) organ and drum machine meditations. On some of the songs, the drum tracks are heavy and blown out in a warm way that contrast beautifully with Nick's (the guy responsible for this) calm, measured vocals. He sings about hope, loss, pain, and death in ways that are a lot less generic than those vague signifiers might lead you to believe. While I'm not going to compare this to other bands, I will say that this would sound great coming out of a busted truck's stereo while driving through the desert at dusk with the windows down. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, humanbaggage@gmail.com, timefraud.bandcamp.com)

TORGO – *Torgo vs. God* – Rhythmic no wave freakouts that effectively challenge and / or defy classification. BRAINBOMBS-level monotony and dreariness sharing space with true a freakout noise / wave guitar that sounds like East Bay Ray doing time with MERZBOW. The internet says TORGO are from Ohio, but I really feel like this band should live in Providence. (WN) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, ogrot.bandcamp.com)

TOXIC WOMB – Third tape from this Columbus punk band, but my first exposure. Gravelly guitars and bass are heavy in the mix, and the dual vocals remind me sometimes of BLATZ and others JOYCE MCKINNEY EXPERIENCE, depending of the amount of melody occuring at any given moment. Fairly straightforward compositions with a good punch. Seven originals and a fitting CRUCIFUCKS cover. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, toxicwombpunk.bandcamp.com, $5 ppd, 2432 Adams Ave., Columbus, OH 43202)

TRASH – *Version 2 / Live on KCSB* – Sometimes sludgy and slow, but other times straight-ahead punk, TRASH brings you growly songs about eating birds, this trash earth and total destruction. Side A is a rough demo that is helped along by its raw recording quality. Side B is a live radio show that, like most radio shows, has an abysmal recording quality. The band is interviewed on the radio, revealing that they practice under bridges since the members live on a boat and in a box truck, which is punk as fuck. (GH) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, sothisisprogress.bandcamp.com)

TRIXIE & THE TRAINWRECKS – *3 Cheers to Nothing* – Brought to you by REV. BEAT-MAN and featuring HOLLY GOLIGHTLY's former drummer, so you can kind of discern where this is at. Ex-pat Trixie herself has a long history in the world of dirty rock'n'roll, most recently as a one-woman band. This outing is electric blues, mostly, but the pre-psychedelic kind, although the best songs lean heavily country & western. Oddly, the disc starts off pretty weak, with blah songs and restrained performances, but it heats up as it keeps moving and Trixie finally convinces her band to loosen up. Lots of harmonica, some yodelling. Trixie herself has an intermittently excellent singing voice and style—mostly flat but occasionally belting and an unusual (perhaps European?) cadence. Other times I found it off-putting (Guru from GANG STARR's rapping has a similar love / hate effect on me, just FYI). *3 Cheers to Nothing* conjures up the same feelings you might get in a hazy, felt-laden bar that only serves stiff cocktails. It's a nice enough place to hang out. (MR) (13-song CD-R, lyrics included, voodoorhythm.com)

ULCER – *Vandalism* – Considering

EFFIGY the most D-beat of their crust lot, AXEWIELD continuing with that same crust-driven metallic chug-riffing, ULCER is the peak of these members' ominous heavy metal volcano. Delivering a dark hardcore thrash attack with their most rhythmic style such as HELLBASTARD, GUILLOTINE TERROR, or NAILBITER. If you know these bands by comparison, and said resume, you know what to expect. Totally addictive headbanging, circle-pitting crust and worth grabbing. Side B is a live set. (JR) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, blacxkonflik.blogspot.com)

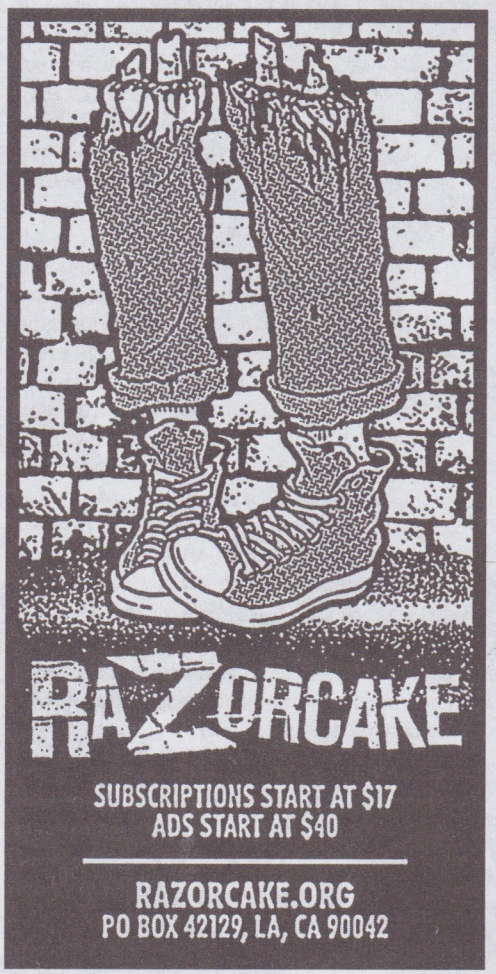
UNFAIR – *Holy Weapon Of Peace* – Relentless politically charged D-beat punk. You never knew by-the-books D-beat / crust could sound so utterly refreshing and new—simple, to the point brutality with buzzsaw guitars, gruff vocals and bleak lyrics that are as blunt as the band themselves. Fucking superb. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, unfairpunk.bandcamp.com)

VICIOS – This recalls the Spanish punk via Bay Area sound similar to PELIGRO SOCIAL, but a bit more back to the basics of the UK82 craze that the punx are wild for. A bit of pogoing, some street beats, and then a standout hi-hat sizzle track with cool guitar / bass interplay on "Camino Sin Regreso." I saw them in Oakland once and they came off a bit more wild live, but this session is steady and tight with a crisp studio production. Totally solid, but likely the best is yet to come. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, vicios.bandcamp.com)

THE WOUND – *15/01/18* – Thick, nasty hardcore punk. '80s-styled bursts of chaos leads from a guitar that is in a constant battle with cohesion, a la mid-era SST artcore. Gruff, forceful vocals punctuate a messy rehearsal mix, and the WOUND descend into indulgent noise rock with an ease defied by the rampant bursts of fury that dominate this tape. *15/01/18* appears to be a rehearsal demo, but there is pure gold buried in this mix...for those who like their hardcore dark and angry, for those who like their nihilism actualized. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

V/A – *Flunk'd Gunk* – A compilation of noise / gunk / experimental / rock bands from different areas of the East Coast. Through mostly fuzzy home recordings, each band brings their own style to the table, offering a well rounded compilation. ULTRABUNNY plays instrumental sludge noise while GONDOLA plays wah-guitar rock'n'roll. Other bands like HUMAN ADULT BAND, TOTAL SYSTEM FAILURE, and SUICIDE MAGNETS round it out with improvised jams, free jazz freakers and experimental noise. Good shit. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, dihd.net, PO Box 610, Lambertville, NJ 08530)

V/A – *Para Cuando En Mi Te Mueres* – A vibrant collection of tracks featuring queer / femme bands spanning across Europe, Australia, South, Central, and North America. Major kudos to Comidillo Tapes for accomplishing the nearly impossible task of curating a comp where literally every song is compelling in some way! The material exists mainly in the range of punk / post-punk / experimental / electronic styles on side A, while the flip features more hardcore or post-punk leaning stuff. Maybe only three or four of these bands were on my radar so I'm thankfully left with so much to discover—particularly MORTE LENTA, PALTAX, RAPID TAN, GUTTERSNIPE, CAMPO MARTE, PISSY, TRINCHETA, and CURRENT AFFAIRS, to name a few. So much better than all that hype shit! Really nice layout and cool looking tapes to top it off. Highly Recommended! (MA) (20-song cassette, lyrics included, comidillotapes.bandcamp.com)



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BANANAS #13–16
Free / 48 pgs
Newsprint fanzine out of London focusing largely on garage rock. Good: the design is quite nice; extensive reviews section; it's free! Bad: Lots of the interviews are pretty surface-level ("what are your influences," etc.); I find most (though not all!) of the bands covered pretty boring; there's hardly a critical word to be found in the reviews. ???: There's a section in the middle with guitar tabs to some '60s garage songs. Worth a look if you're into garage revival shit. I mean, it's free, so you've really got nothing to lose here. (MF)
bananas-magazine.com / bananasads@gmail.com

BREAK THE CHAIN #3
$4 / 36 pgs
Half sized color copied zine from Jacksonville, Florida. Interviews with musical outfits (Big Ups, Priests, UV-TV, and Profit Prison), artwork spreads from Austin Redwood (pleasant watercolor jawns) and Stacey Matchett (tripped out ink / marker overloads), and a listing of shitty "political pundit" figures steaming from the news cycle around the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner. The interviews try / do verge into more interesting territory by asking about books and influences outside the usual listing of classic bands. Good effort and has an okay aesthetic. (JA)
duvaldiykid@gmail.com / etsy.com/shop/breakthechainzine

COOL HISS #7
$2 / 12 pgs
Comprised of reprints of the RHDP interview from *MRR* #399 and Haircut interview from #422. Looks good with a fake *MRR* cover ("Maximum Coolnhiss") that is maybe a reply to the reprinted *MRR* review of an earlier issue calling out the dismal layout and stapling. Nothing to write home about, but it's cool. (JA)
2227 Venable Street, Richmond, VA 23223 / bebaynes@gmail.com

NOT FOR EVERYONE #5
$5 / 22 pgs
Nicely laid out cut'n'paste zine outta Portland that focuses on hardcore and skateboarding. Includes interviews with Civil Dissident (from Australia), the Roobydocks (Cleveland), and Windpipe (Milwaukee) along with record reviews, local news, and some skateboarding pics to boot. All three of the interviews are with bands that I wasn't familiar with (although I have heard the Civil Dissident tracks on *Cleanse the Bacteria*), and they were compelling enough to make me check them out. Overall a good read but not without problems. The author's use of "r*******" and "l*me" is pretty fucked up and ableist, and their infrequent presence was enough to make me less interested in the zine and its author overall. (JD)
12525 SE Salmon Ct / Portland, Or 97233 / snukytate@gmail.com

OUT FROM THE VOID #1
16 pgs
Although this isn't punk in the least, it's hard to dismiss, as the subject matter is pretty sincere. Its focus is Eugene, Oregon, and some of the missing persons associated with that city. With few tweaks in any direction whatsoever, this could have been really informative, shocking, interesting, or, and I don't mean to be disrespectful, but even entertaining. As it stands, it is admittedly a straight up rip from the online edition of the Eugene Weekly, fonts, cutaways and all, and the only effort that went into this "zine" was transferring it to paper. Maybe this was written by a punk. Who knows? I did learn that there's this thing called the Charley Project that has different rules and classifications of criteria, ending in different lists of missing persons than the US government, but overall, this wasn't really too helpful or eye opening. The stance on police aid was what you'd expect from regular scared people, dealing with the traumatic loss of a loved one. A little pro, a little against. (DZ)
eberhardtpress.com

PROOF I EXIST #28
$2 / 40 pgs
Perzine from longtime zinester Billy McCall focusing primarily on drugs and family. Inspired by Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*, the story (or rather stories) is presented through numbered bullet form. This allows McCall to explore a series of related memories involving his brother, his father, various drug users, and his own personal interactions with different drugs. The zine has an air of grief to it: McCall's father's death plays a part here, and multiple other lost lives are remembered here. But key to the story is Aaron, the often-distant brother. Much of the distance is created through Aaron's drug use, which sometimes leads Billy to regret the choices he's made in their relationship over time. The zine highlights Aaron's struggles including the loss of a close friend, substance abuse, arrests, a difficult marriage, and a slew of other problems that stem from Aaron's meth and heroin use. But Aaron's story is not presented as a moralizing lesson. Instead, McCall is largely sympathetic to him and his struggles, painting Aaron as a good, but flawed, person. People looking for answers or directions for supporting friends and family with addiction will find little help here, but the story is worth reading nevertheless. (JD)
iknowbilly@gmail.com

RADIO POGO #1
£1.50 / 12 pgs
Rad! A mini directory on where to listen to punk on the air or on your fucking internet thing. It would be cool enough if it were just a listing of these 20-30 stations (or channels, or shows, or whatever you say in 2018 now), but it's even better, with nudges and advice on creating your own radio show, finding local community radio and getting involved in

the whole ordeal, whether it be employment or volunteering. As a grumpy old timer that uses the internet he despises, it's cool to get a reminder that younger punks are still working like this to find new shit, as opposed to flipping through streaming sites like they're dating apps. The author promises there will be a second issue, and I'm stoked on that. (DZ)
Ben Perkins, 9c Amershan Rd London SE14 6QQ

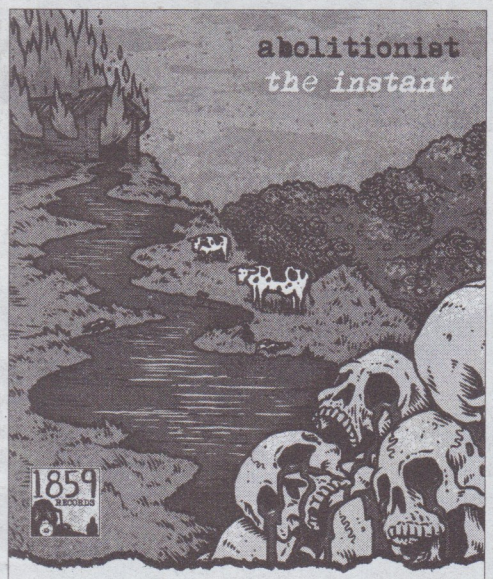
RAZORCAKE #104
$4 / 112 pgs
Razorcake is always worth checking out. *Maximum Rocknroll* and *Razorcake* are like siblings in that they're into some different things and may go their own way, but they'll always share some core DNA. Read both and learn things. I've never been disappointed by a single issue of RC, but this issue was particularly fun. First, the collection of cartoons in this issue was super on point (Marinaomi, Ben Snakepit, and Lucky Naka). Second, a sad but helpful take on working with a childhood hero who it turned out was also a monster (John K.) by Art Fuentes stood out. Third, Kitten Forever is one of the best bands out there right now, and they get an awesome, long interview. Read this interview. Then, buy all their stuff. Then, go to every show you can possibly see them at. It's totally worth it. Lastly, the most fun part of this issue is "One Punk's Movie Guide" by Mike Plante. If you're even a minor cinephile, this will be a whole lot of fun for you. The author covers, in good detail, over 50 must-see films that any punk will love, including obvious classics like *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981) and *Return of the Living Dead* (1985) and deeper cuts like *Duck Soup* (1933) and *The Punk Syndrome* (2012). Consider this article a free film school class and take notes! It's grand. (RH)
razorcake.org

SPIDDER #19
$2 / 16 pgs
These folks are on #19 and it shows. What started out as a few scrawly comics and a debatable ghost story has blossomed into much better scrawly comics, better ghost stories, li'l write ups on dead jazz, country, or Cajun musicians, a few tour stories, and interviews with living musicians who can sometimes be called punks, as well as lovers of aforementioned genres. This issue has comics, photos of the author's bands' trip to Japan, an interview with Pete of Slow Motion Cowboys / Train Wreck Riders, and a mini write up on these two New Orleans fiddlers from the 1940s. A killer quick read, and I think it's hitting its stride. As always, I must admit, the authors are friends of mine, so take this with a grain of salt, but I wouldn't lie to you motherfuckers. (DZ)
arkamrecords.squarespace.com

THIS GODDAMN BODY #1
$3 / 24 pgs
The author, Maira, starts this zine with a laundry list of trigger warnings, and it's best to take those seriously; even as someone who feels relatively comfortable engaging with most of the issues listed, this zine was a gut punch at times. In it, the author details their relationship with their body through the lens of childhood sexual assault, gender dysphoria, and mental illness. Trauma has a physical impact on a person, and as difficult as this zine is to read at times, it's necessary for so many reasons to chronicle those often overlooked effects. An intense, important read. (MF)
neonclear@gmail.com

TOLEDO PONKEROS #3
$1 / 20 pgs
Hell yes! Always stoked to get the new *TP* (an unfortunate moniker, I know)! It's hard to tell exactly what's going on with the authors as it's a little sporadic, but it's pretty punk and hasn't pissed me off yet. Seemingly older punk Latinx bros who are into street punk and Oi!, but still seem sweet, somehow. Yes, I'm actually biased about older bros into street punk and Oi!. If I remember correctly, other issues have been pretty rad, shoddy, hastily put together, with just a few mini political rants, and I loved them. Gone are the drunken heartfelt rants, but this is still killer. A few reviews on the punk (and not so punk) music that inspired the author growing up, a review of the entire output of Oi! boys Brass, an interview with locals Just Shy Of, a handful of show photos, and a poster of Los Jacks, natch. Always worth a buck, but send postage, ya worms. (DZ)
TPTZ 2040 Alvin St Toledo, OH, 43607

TOTALLY DIFFERENT HEAD #3
$3 / 20 pgs
Interviews with Lithics, Mr. Wrong, the Social Stomach and Karissa Sakumoto, reflections on Fred Cole's passing, record reviews, Mdou Moctar show review, and a quick intro about the struggles of making in interesting zine. This zine's really good. Well laid out, looks good with neat graphics (mostly artwork from people being interviewed), and mixes up white on black and black on white text well. The interviews and writing push into larger art questions outside of / parallel to punk without seeming forced. Good to find out about Sakumoto, whose stuff reminds me of a fresh version of heta-uma / King Terry-ish stuff. Good zine that I look forward to further issues of. (JA)
totallydifferenthead.bigcartel.com / brainsandhands@yahoo.com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7/12 - Sacramento, CA
7/13 - Berkeley, CA
7/14 - Los Angeles, CA
7/15 - Fullerton, CA
7/16 - San Diego, CA
7/17 - Las Vegas, NV
7/18 - Flagstaff, AZ
7/19 - Albuquerque, NM
7/20 - Taos, NM
7/21 - Denver, CO
7/22 - Fort Collins, CO
7/23 - SLC, UT
7/24 - Nampa, ID
7/25 - Reno, NV
7/26 - San Francisco, CA
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7/28 - Eugene, OR

see abolitionist.bandcamp.com
for the latest venue info

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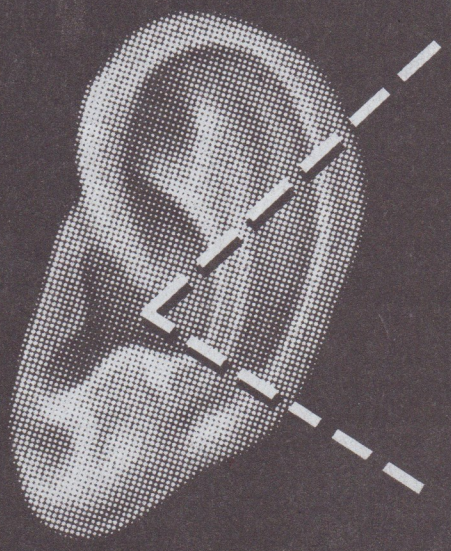

- Your band's name and contact info!
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